Saturday Review
JANUARY 1982 $1.50

The Graying of Saul Bellow

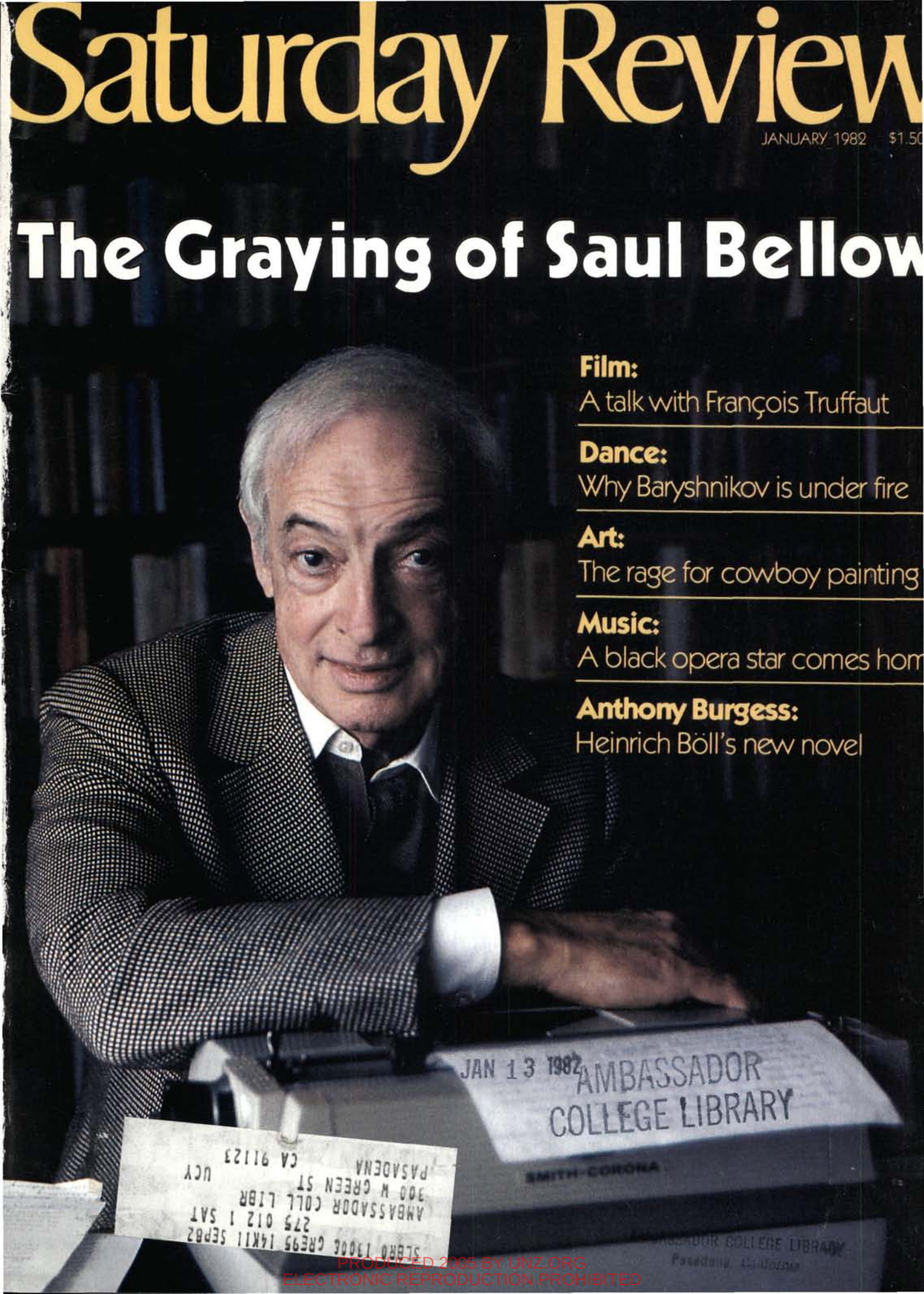
Film:
A talk with François Truffaut

Dance:
Why Baryshnikov is under fire

Art:
The rage for cowboy painting

Music:
A black opera star comes hom

Anthony Burgess:
Heinrich Böll's new novel



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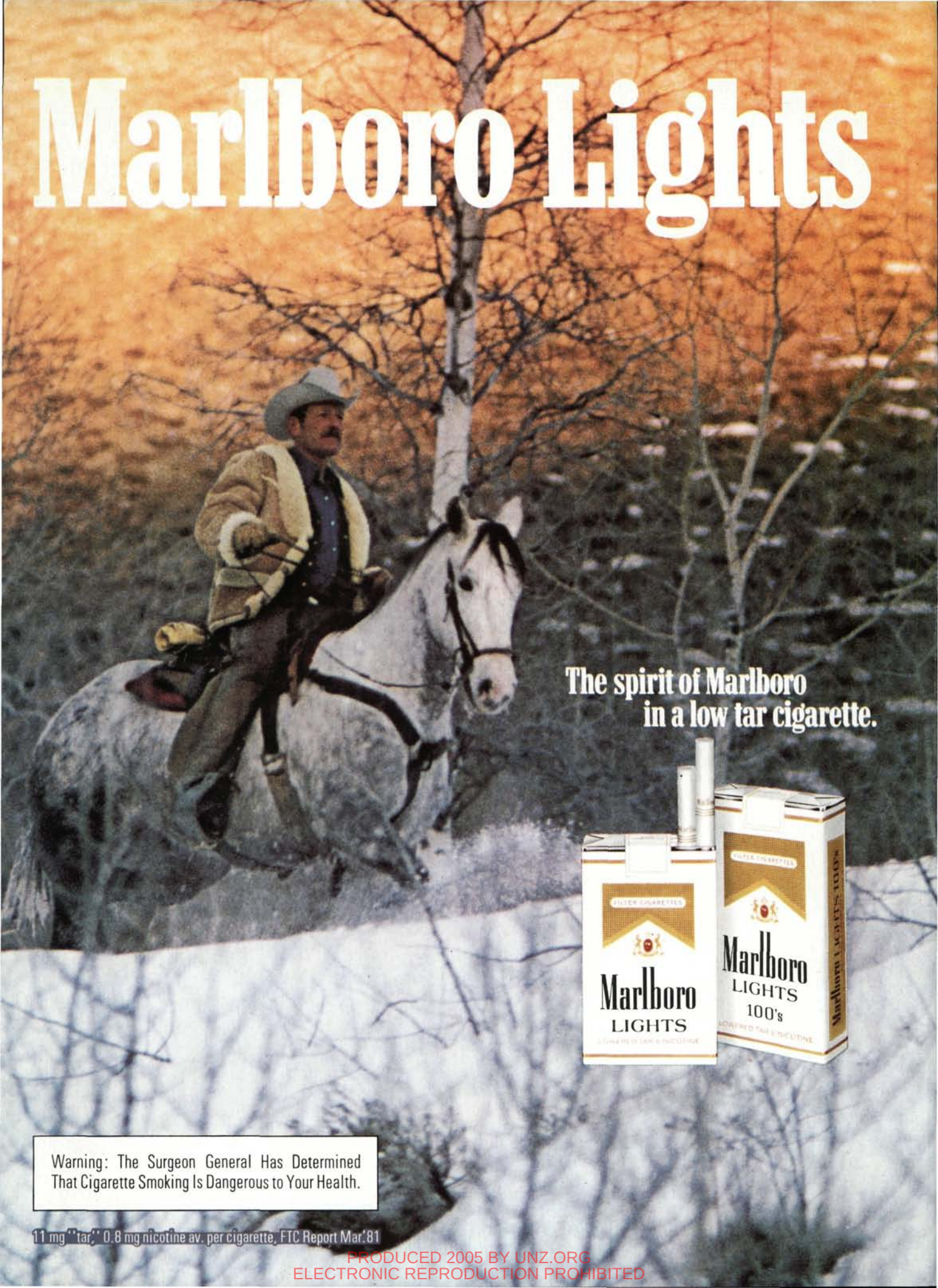

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Paul Bunyans of the oil age

It sounds like a Paul Bunyan saga, 20th century style. A huge wedge is slammed through the spine of a mile-long tree, and the rich sap comes spewing out. But the tree is solid rock, and the wedge is a stream of high-pressure fluid, laced with hundreds of tons of sand. And what comes flowing out is natural gas.

Massive hydraulic fracturing, as this dramatic technique is called, is one of the ways the energy industry is trying to coax additional energy out of an oftentimes reluctant earth. Commercialized just a few years ago, it opens up a bright new horizon in natural gas production.

There are several ways to improve the productivity of oil fields. Chemical detergents can "scrub out" oil droplets caught in porous rock formations. Underground fires or great billows of steam can enhance the flow of heavy oil. Water or carbon dioxide pumped into a reservoir can push previously bypassed oil toward production wells, from which it can be pumped to the surface.

Such techniques, however, don't work in natural gas fields. Unlike oil, gas doesn't get "snagged" inside rock formations and, since it's already pressurized, it doesn't need an extra push to get to the surface. If a gas reservoir isn't producing, it's usually because the rock formation is too impermeable for gas to reach the wells. Fracturing the formation is often the solution.

Massive fracturing is a tricky business, though. Extensive studies must be conducted to determine subsurface conditions and to design the proper sand/water mix and pumping rates. If there's a mistake, the water won't carry the sand far enough into the reservoir, and the sand will back up, blocking further fracturing efforts.

The fracturing operation, itself, is relatively straightforward, and normally requires just a few hours. Specially designed pumps force a mixture of water (with special thickeners) and sand down the well at a pressure of up to 10,000 pounds per square inch—seven times the amount of pressure generated in a jet engine. The sand-laden water comes shooting through small holes in the steel pipe which lines the walls of the well, penetrating the rock formation and causing cracks that extend hundreds of feet or more. When the pumping stops, the sand keeps the cracks propped open, providing a channel for gas to flow to the well.

Mobil has been doing massive fracturing in several western states and Germany since the early seventies. In one of our east Texas fields, the process proved so successful that four old wells were reopened and 18 new ones drilled in an area that would otherwise have been abandoned.

Right now, massive fracturing is boosting U.S. gas production by less than a trillion cubic feet a year, or about four percent. But by the turn of the century, government experts say this process could be producing some seven trillion cubic feet a year more than would otherwise be available.

While new recovery technologies can't add to the nation's total energy resources, they can help America make use of as much gas as possible. And that's no small contribution in an era when every little bit counts.

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Saturday Review®
JANUARY 1982

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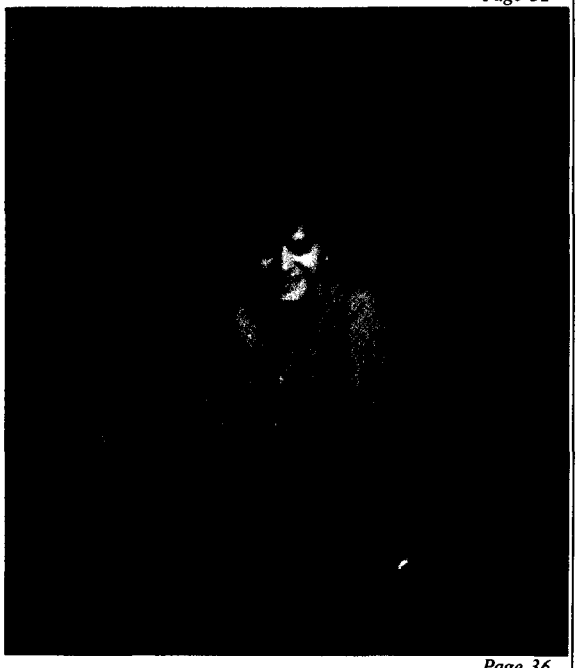

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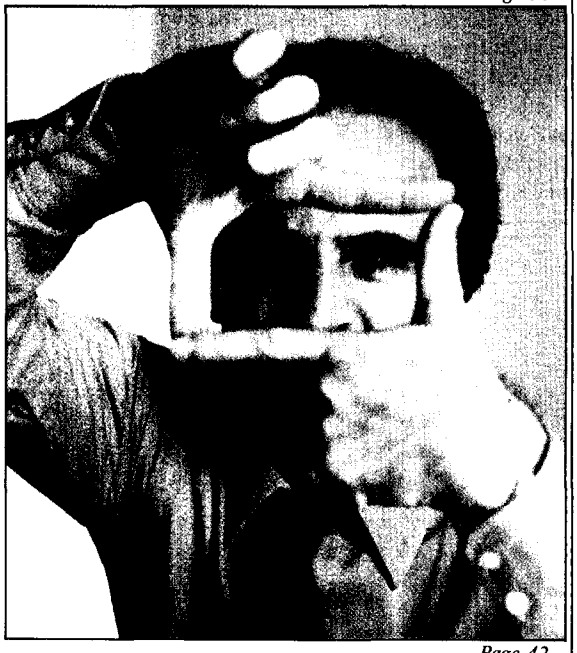

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Museum Corruption: Morris Replies

I must take exception to the article "Museums and Corruption," by Lee Seldes in your July 1981 issue....

The headline implies criminal activity, and I strongly resent the inclusion of the episode in Greenville in that context, as the entire matter there was dealt with by an informal fact-finding panel of the museum board without litigation of any form whatsoever....

The caption under the photograph on page 12 states that the Magills gave the Jamie Wyeth portrait of Rudolf Nureyev to the museum. A check of museum records of this date indicates that such a gift has, in fact, not been made....

The article correctly points out that Arthur Magill has never denied that he and his wife knew that I was paid for my services on their behalf. It does, however, fail to mention that on August 6, 1979, a full year before the complaint in July 1980, the entire Magill-Levine transaction was reviewed by the entire Museum Commission, including discussion of the amount of my fee. Not one single member of the commission at that time expressed surprise, shock, or anything other than complete support....

Seldes says that "the Commission voted 7 to 4 to demand Morris's resignation." Bernard F. Bertland, chairman of the museum fact-finding panel, stated in a published article: "We called Jack in for consultation to see if we could find some mutually acceptable grounds on which he could continue as director of the museum. But there was no agreement, and so he resigned...he made his own decision to resign...."

I trust you will extend to me the justice of publication of these corrections, and that your readers will understand that this complex issue was subject to many varying opinions and interpretations. As far as I am concerned, the matter has been resolved. *Jack A. Morris*
Scottsdale, Arizona

Disputing Updike's Epic

If *Rabbit Is Rich* is an American epic ["John Updike: Turning Sex and Guilt Into an American Epic," October], I guess I'll go back to reading Louisa May Alcott. Updike's "keen sociological eye" never gets beyond the scope of the instant photos his main character sneaks a look at. In his zeal to record the "importunate demands of the flesh," he forgets all about the "vague spiritual illusions" he tells us hound his hero.

Despite Michiko Kakutani's sympathetic interview with the author, I believe that *Rabbit Is Rich* will be quickly read, quickly forgotten. *Beverly B. Nichols*
Lexington, Massachusetts

On Hollywood and Homosexuality

Stephen Farber's diatribe "Hollywood and Homosexuality" [October] comes as no surprise. All the so-called stars who are playing homosexuals have been suspect for years. But more than 100 million people won't go to see any of the shows he mentions. We prefer, like the president, to watch *Little House on the Prairie.*
Ralph W. Tucker
Fresno, California

Haller on Henley

I'd like to congratulate Scot Haller on his fine article about Beth Henley ["Her First Play, Her First Pulitzer," November]. The interview with Henley was terrific, and I liked the way he presented his point of view about the play. *Tina Detrie*
Cudahy, Wisconsin

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"I've decided to get rid of all the yes-men, nay-sayers, and equivocators. What do you think, Parker?"

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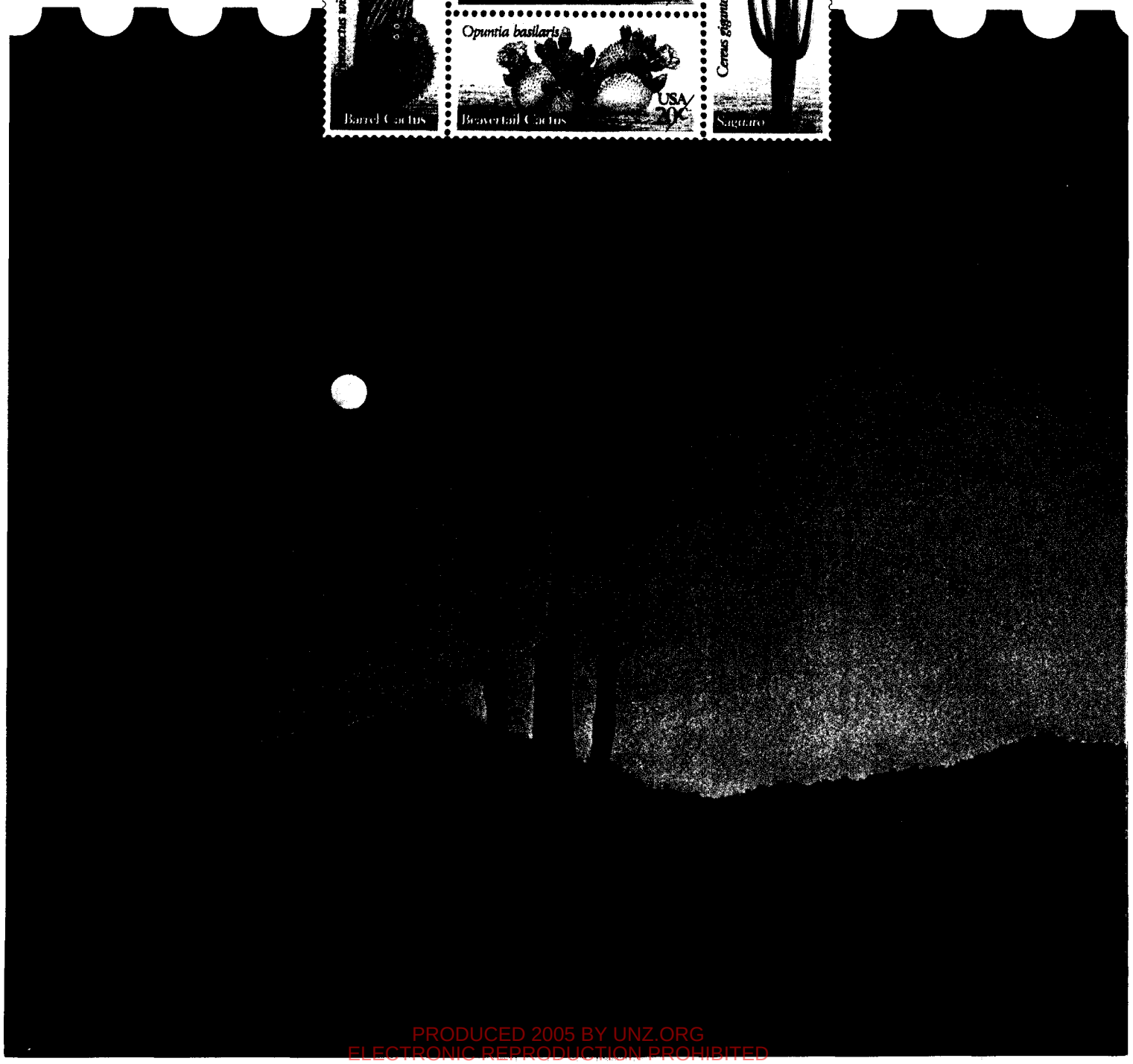

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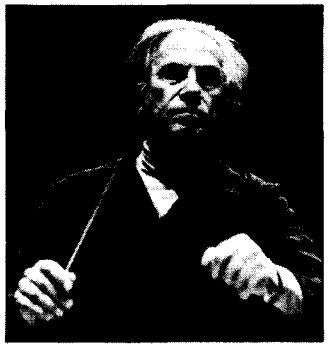
★★★ THE INSIDER ★★★

EDITED BY SCOT HALLER

Detroit's Musical Blues

Like the auto industry, the Detroit Symphony has fallen on hard times. The orchestra's future is seriously jeopardized these days by management problems and financial difficulties. In the course of one month last spring, both the general manager and the music director, Antal Dorati, resigned—and the board president died. The positions remain unfilled. With no executive leadership and a galloping deficit, the organization must now face difficult contract negotiations with musicians, who forfeited one pay increase last September.

The Motown symphony's *de profundis* began last year when Dorati, its conductor since 1977, sent a controversial open letter to the board asking for guarantees of recording contracts, concert tours, and festival dates—standard but expensive items. Not only were those requests denied but the board canceled the orchestra's annual East Coast tour as well. Dorati threw in his baton, and last summer, Gary Bertini of the Jerusalem Symphony stepped



Conductor Antal Dorati: Throwing in his baton.

to the podium as a temporary replacement.

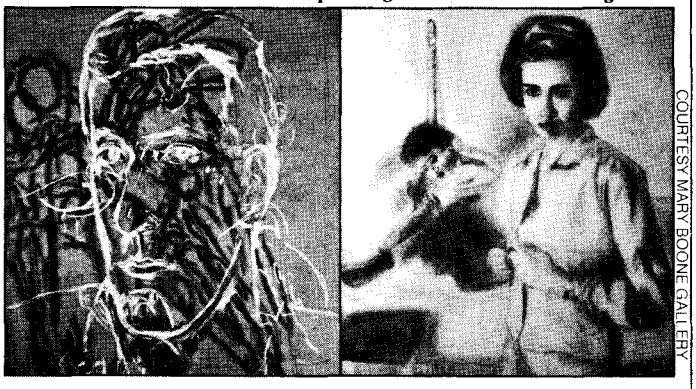
To get back on its feet, the organization has initiated a $2.4 million fund-raising drive. "The business community has pledged its support, and we're going to fill the open positions," promises a spokesman. Meanwhile, simply to meet expenses, the board has had to dip into an endowment marked for long-range use by its donor, the late Mrs. Edsel Ford. "They just don't have the cash for everyday necessities like stamps," reports *Detroit Free Press* music critic John Guinn. —S.K.R.

An Artist Violated

Julien Schnabel and David Salle are both highly fashionable artists in New York (see page 50). They're also good friends, given to practical jokes on each other. A year ago, they agreed to exchange paintings as gifts. Salle shipped a diptych, "Demonizations," to Schnabel's loft. The left panel depicted a young woman dressing in front of a boy; the right panel was an abstraction. In return, Salle said he'd like Schnabel to paint his portrait. Schnabel asked for Salle's photograph to paint from.

When Salle finally went to Schnabel's studio to see his portrait, he discovered that Schnabel had reversed the panels of "Demonizations" and had painted Salle's face in Salle's style across the abstract panel, thus destroying Salle's painting. Salle says that he experienced a gamut of emotions, beginning—naturally enough—with shock and outrage. But after half an hour of staring at Schnabel's reworking, Salle decided that the complex moral and aesthetic issues raised by the new work were worth the violation. The artists own the painting jointly (it's now called "Jump"), they've exhibited it at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York City, and they've even declined lavish offers to sell it. The two artists are still friends, and Salle carefully explains his acceptance of it all: "Art is about going too far." —C.R.

Collaborative medium: Salle's painting—with Schnabel's changes.

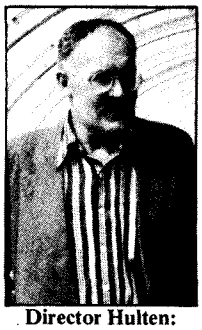


COURTESY MARY BOONE GALLERY

A New Museum For Los Angeles

It has no building as yet and very few paintings, but the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles is slowly taking shape. Launched with the support of Marcia Weisman (Norton Simon's sister) and other Los Angeles art collectors, the museum will focus on modern art produced since 1945—a period largely neglected by that bastion of modernism, New York's Museum of Modern Art.

The museum's board has raised $13.5 million recently, and a Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki, is finishing the design for a downtown building scheduled to open in 1984. Most important, the museum has hired as its director Pontus Hulten, who was chief curator at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, popularly known as the "Beaubourg."



Director Hulten: collecting friends.

Hulten, who arrived last September, has the tough job of building a first-rate collection. The museum has only about 100 works so far, but Hulten hopes to spur acquisitions by appointing collector-friends to the museum's board. Among them: Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo of Italy and Dr. Peter Ludwig of Germany, each of whom owns a prized collection of American art. "Panza and Ludwig have already told me that I can count on parts of their collections," says Hulten.

In Stockholm, Hulten once staged an exhibition entitled "Trains We Have Missed" that featured key works the museum had failed to acquire—after which donations soared. For his first exhibition in Los Angeles, he plans to highlight loaned works, hoping they too will then be donated. Hulten is calling the time remaining before the museum officially opens, "Temporary Contemporary." —S.K.R.

Good News for Foreign Films

The foreign film, darling of critics and movie buffs, has generally been anathema to most theater owners. Because the audience willing to read subtitles or listen to dubbed voices is small, the majority of these films never play Peoria—or anywhere else outside a few major East and West Coast cities. But the recent growth of repertory cinemas and ancillary markets such as cable TV and video cassettes has sparked new enthusiasm for the art-house movie. "Many of these films can be picked up for little or no upfront money," explains 20th Century-Fox exec Mike Nolan. "And these new markets make it more than marginally profitable."

Consequently, the Hollywood studios have begun scrambling to set up divisions to handle these films. The most active, United Artists Classics, has released François Truffaut's *The Last Métro* and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen* as well as small-budget, hard-to-hype American features like *Cutter's Way*. Later this month, Columbia Pictures is inaugurating its own division, and 20th Century-Fox is expected to launch a similar operation.

With the advertising bankrolls of the studios behind them, these films have reached theaters that would not have accommodated them previously. Several cities, including Philadelphia and Detroit, have blossomed into prime markets for foreign films. The success of these movies—and the failure of many high-budget films—may insure further diversity. "The audience is becoming more fragmented," reports Nolan. "As that happens, the art-house audience is going to develop more clout." —S.H.

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JANUARY SPOTLIGHTS

DANCE

A First for Peter Martins

Peter Martins, a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet for 11 years now, has been called the quintessential Balanchine dancer. He may be fast becoming the quintessential Balanchine choreographer as well, for the master has taken him under his choreographic wing and encouraged him to create dances. (Rumors persist that Martins is being groomed as Balanchine's successor at the NYCB.) Nearly all of Martins's ballets have been well received—including *Calcium Night Light*, *Eight Easy Pieces*, *Sonate di Scarlatti,* and *Symphony No. 1.*

Until last spring, Martins had never created a story ballet, and he needed to do so to prove his versatility. Prevailed on by Balanchine, Martins selected **The Magic Flute**. He used the original book (which has nothing to do with the Mozart opera) and traditional music by Riccardo Drigo, but the choreography is all new, with no ties to *The Magic Flute* choreographed by Lev Ivanov in

▲ **Peter Martins has choreographed a story ballet, *The Magic Flute.***

ARTHUR ELGORT

1893. The assignment must have caused Martins some apprehension, as past associations with the Ivanov classic would lead to high expectations for this new *Flute*.

But the ballet was successfully given by the School of American Ballet last May, and this month it will receive its professional premiere with the NYCB at Lincoln Center. For the first time, Martins's name will appear on the program, along with Balanchine, under the heading "ballet master." *The Magic Flute* must have shown Balanchine what he was looking for. (January 21.)

©GRANADA TV

▼ **Anthony Andrews (left) and Jeremy Irons in *Brideshead Revisited.***

TELEVISION

Irons in the Fire

The British producers of **Brideshead Revisited** were determined to make their project a blockbuster. At a cost of $8.4 million, they hired hundreds of actors, shot the drama on locations throughout Europe from Oxford to Malta, lured Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, and Claire Bloom into the cast as supporting actors, and chose Jeremy Irons for the lead. Irons is currently a "hot property" in Great Britain, though in the U.S. he is known chiefly for his portrayals of Michel Fokine in the 1980 film *Nijinsky* and of the two heros in last year's movie version of *The French Lieutenant's Woman.*

The result is an opulent 11-episode TV series based on Evelyn Waugh's novel. Presumed to be the most autobiographical of Waugh's works, *Brideshead Revisited* traces the decline of an extravagantly wealthy English family over a 20-year period from 1923 to 1944. Irons plays Charles Ryder, the narrator who observes and becomes involved to the point of obsession with the Marchmain family, after he meets the younger Marchmain son (Anthony Andrews) at Oxford. (Series begins January 11.)

A Debut for Cheever

John Cheever has written his first television play. The author of more than 200 short stories and five novels, Cheever is a master at illuminating slices of Americana, which is exactly what he has done in this PBS production, **The Shady Hill Kidnapping**. A spoof of TV soap operas, it is a comedy of errors revolving around a family named Wooster. The apparent kidnapping of five-year-old Toby Wooster provides the crisis through which Cheever explores family and community. The soapy tale comes complete with satirical commercials.

Shady Hill is the first in a new PBS series of dramas, comedies, and musicals, known collectively as *American Playhouse*. Cheever's contribution stars George Grizzard and Polly Holliday. Grizzard, best known as a Broadway actor, has been seen on public television as John Adams in *The Adams Chronicles*, and Polly Holliday wise-cracked her way to fame as a waitress in the TV sitcom *Alice*, then earned her own series, *Flo*. Will Cheever's soap opera receive the same acclaim as his short stories and novels? (Tuesday, January 12.)

◄ **Left to right: Judith Ivey, David Grant, Polly Holliday, George Grizzard**

MUSIC

Dudley Moore Goes Longhair

Last season, when violinist Robert Mann (founder and first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet) was planning a concert at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art for this month, he suggested that he would like to perform with two friends: principal clarinetist of the New York Philharmonic Stanley Drucker and pianist **Dudley Moore**.

Dudley Moore the actor? The diminutive, bleary-eyed comedian of *10* and *Arthur* who reportedly asks $1 million per picture? The same. Moore portrayed a composer and played a few moments of cocktail-hour piano in *10*, but until recently, the only

▲ **Movie comedian Dudley Moore is also a classical pianist.**

UPI

public sign of his talent for serious music had been his lampoons of classical genres in *Beyond the Fringe*, the British satirical revue in which Moore first found fame. (His Oxford college classmates with whom he evolved *Fringe*: physician-turned-director Jonathan Miller, playwright Alan Bennett, and actor Peter Cook.)

As it happens, Moore earned degrees in music and composition at Oxford and made pocket money in his teens as an organist. He has been playing chamber music privately with Mann for years. Moore has appeared twice in Los Angeles concerts between films, but his performance at the Met effectively marks his debut on the U.S. classical music circuit. He will join Mann and Drucker performing works by Mozart, Berg, Brahms, Beethoven, and Bartok. And yes, he's perfectly serious. (January 3.)

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Caldwell will bring to Boston an opera "America can never see."

OPERA

Sarah Caldwell's Newest Gamble

Die Soldaten (The Soldiers), by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, has been the best received modern German opera since Berg's *Lulu*. Based on a 1775 drama by J.M.R. Lenz, it follows the descent to prostitution of a middle-class Flemish girl after her father encourages her to consort with French soldiers. The opera premiered in Cologne in 1965 and has since been seen in several German cities and at the Edinburgh Festival. Due to its scenic and musical complexities, however, critics have called it "the opera that America can never see."

The difficulties arise with what Zimmermann referred to as "pluralistic theater": His score calls for a simultaneity of past, present, and future, with three scenes sometimes occurring on stage all at once. Dance, speech, song, and film are combined in an effort to bring together as many theatrical elements as possible. Zimmermann even visualized his opera performed in a theater where the audience would be surrounded on all sides by stages.

This month, America will see *Die Soldaten* after all. The redoubtable Sarah Caldwell, head of the Opera Company of Boston, will stage the U.S. premiere, using three singers from a Frankfurt production, William Cochran, Bodo Schwanbeck, and Ottoniel Gonzaga. Caldwell has never shrunk from the scenic challenges of opera, and some of her solutions have been spectacular. Zimmermann's opera, opening her new season, sounds as daring as anything she has ever tried. (Premieres January 24.)

ART

Van Ruisdael—At Last

In the 300 years since the death of the greatest of Dutch landscape painters, **Jacob van Ruisdael**, there has never been a comprehensive exhibition devoted exclusively to his work. Until now. This month the Fogg Art Museum of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in cooperation with the Mauritshius of The Hague, Netherlands, will offer a retrospective of more than 100 Ruisdael paintings, drawings, and etchings gathered from such far-flung collections as the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the National Gallery in London, museums in Budapest, Chicago, Detroit, Dresden, Edinburgh, and Paris, not to mention the Fogg's own holdings.

Ruisdael's rich landscapes are known for their "heroic" trees. These become the expressive focal point of the paintings, while human figures are small and unobtrusive, apparently present only to provide contrast with the immensity of nature around them. Though the work of Ruisdael was locally popular during his lifetime, it fell into obscurity during the 18th century, and only began to have international influence during the 19th century when Romantic writers and artists discovered its "sweet melancholy." The current exhibit offers an unusual benefit: Its catalogue is the first in-depth, illustrated survey of the artist's work in more than 50 years. The catalogue's forerunner, published in 1928, is such a rare book that when a copy is found, it sells for nearly as much as a Ruisdael etching! (January 18 through April 11.)

FOGG ART MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

◄ Ruisdael's "The Windmill at Wijk bij Duurstede," from the Fogg exhibit.

Early Kandinsky

In 1896, Russian-born Vasily Kandinsky went to Munich to study art. By the time he left in 1914, he had not only created book plates, carpets, furniture, and dress designs, but he had made one of history's first artistic leaps to abstraction, and had earned international repute as an avant-garde artist. This month, the Guggenheim Museum in New York City opens its doors on **Kandinsky in Munich 1896-1914**, a retrospective focusing both on Kandinsky and on the artistic and social climate of pre-World War I Munich. Other artists represented in the show include Hermann Obrist, Carl Strathmann, Alfred Kubin, Hans Christiansen, Peter Behrens, and Gabriele Münter. Nearly 300 works, many of them never before shown in the United States, will be on display. They document Kandinsky's daring experimentalism, his symbolism, and his early grappling with abstraction in watercolors and oil paintings.

The exhibition will be further embellished by the world premiere of Kandinsky's stage composition, *The Yellow Sound*, an abstract theater piece, similar to a one-act opera. Earlier attempts have been made at staging *The Yellow Sound*, but this will be the first to use the original score by Thomas de Hartmann. The Guggenheim exhibit will proceed to San Francisco in April; *The Yellow Sound* is scheduled for a European tour. (January 22 through March 21.)

"Walled City in Autumn Landscape" by Vasily Kandinsky (ca. 1902). ▲

THEATER

Nicol Williamson's Macbeth

Few voodoo cults are as rife with superstition as the professional theater. And in the stage's litany of ill omens, **Macbeth** is counted as one of the direst: A performer appearing in any other play who quotes *Macbeth* backstage is said to be courting imminent disaster. Moreover, the play itself is reputed to be a hard-luck vehicle: Few actors ever triumph in the title role. (Most actors fail at Lear, too, but somehow *King Lear* isn't thought to be similarly jinxed.)

This month, British actor Nicol Williamson will dare all and tackle the role of the bloody thane at Broadway's Circle in the Square. Williamson made an imposing Broadway debut 15 years ago in *Inadmissible Evidence*, and he has since garnered impressive reviews for nearly everything he has done, including a robust Hamlet and a sniveling Uncle Vanya. (In film, he's best known for his Sherlock Holmes in *The Seven Per Cent Solution*.)

Williamson's reputation is based equally on his affinity for angst-ridden roles (appropriate for Macbeth) and on his off-stage temperament: He is said to have slugged David Merrick in an alley and to have slapped a fellow actor during a Broadway curtain call. All of which suggests his Macbeth could strike impetuous theatrical fire. Unless, as the old pros whisper, the jinx is at work again. (Premieres January 28.)

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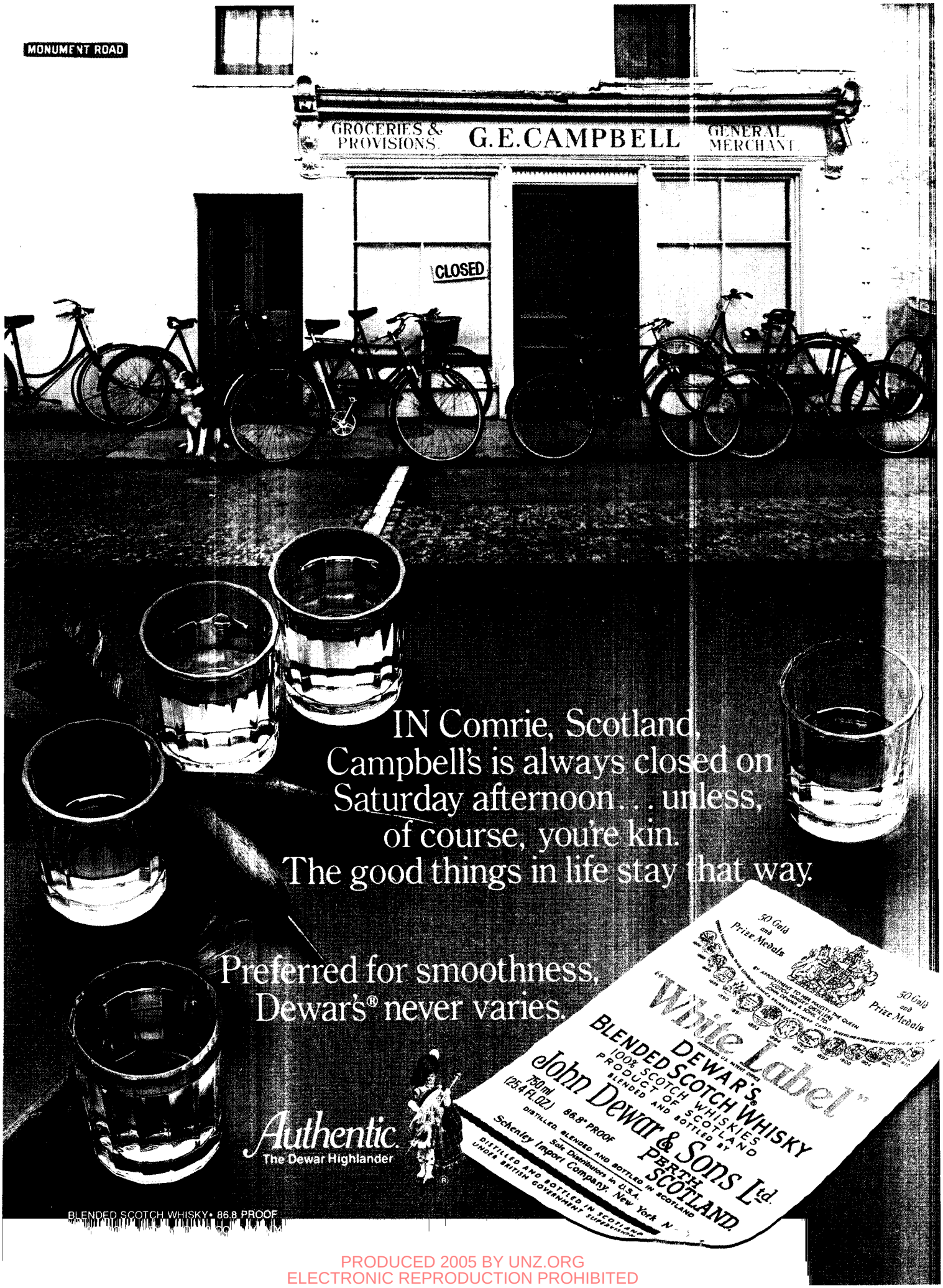

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The Knowledge Magistrate

For almost half a century, Mortimer Adler has been involved in the systematic pursuit and dissemination of the ideas that have become the building blocks of Western civilization. Whether as educator or philosopher or author, he has done as much as any person alive to make the products of history's great thinkers available to large numbers of people. He has assigned to himself the enormous task of classifying and arranging those products for general consumption. He played a major part in reshaping the curriculum of the University of Chicago, under Robert M. Hutchins, with closely related programs at St. John's University and elsewhere. In publishing, he was largely responsible for the most far-reaching changes in the concept of an encyclopedia since Diderot. The current edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is tribute to his passion for the workable organization of knowledge. He is also the main force behind the *Great Books of the Western World*, the keystone of which is the *Syntopticon*, a thesaurus of ideas that is a major achievement in itself.

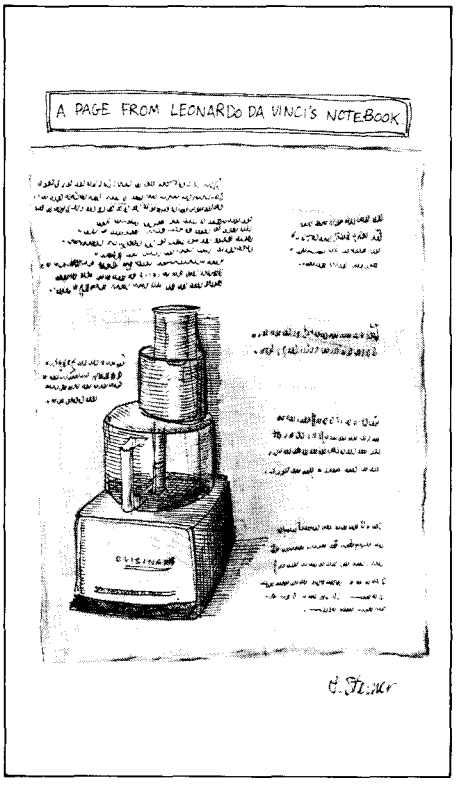
Most of Adler's intellectual undertakings have been generated through the Institute for Philosophical Research, based in Chicago, a unique organization that creates the materials that eventually find their way into publications or other outlets which he has inspired or helps to direct. The latest of his books, now 17 in number, is *Six Great Ideas: Ideas We Judge By/Ideas We Act On*. Like a latter-day Aristotle, he examines historic ideas in this book in terms of their development and applies the highly differentiated system of logic that has become his trademark.

My purpose here is not to review his latest book, other than to bear witness that it is up to his usual high standard, but to pay tribute to a man who has spent a lifetime in helping people make connections, sequentially and systematically, to the long body of ideas that have gone into the making of Western civilization. He has shortened the gap between past and future even as he has enriched the present. He does justice to Santayana's advice. "We must welcome the future," said Santayana, "remembering that soon it will be the past, and we must respect the past, remembering that once it was all that is humanly possible."

I must emphasize that my comments are not unbiased. I was associated with Mortimer Adler as a member of the Board of Editors on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in the Aspen Institute during its formative years. We both were privileged to work closely with the late Robert Hutchins in various undertakings and shared our admiration of Hutchins's wizardry in moving disparate forces in certain directions. What made Hutchins so remarkable was that his wit and sharpness of tongue had the ultimate effect of reconciliation rather than alienation. Adler's persistence was no less pronounced than Hutchins's random thrusts. They made a striking duo—Hutchins with his ability to throw a grand loop around a complex idea or complicated situation, Adler with his ability to recognize the origins of things and give them their proper place.

Adler, now approaching 80, is still caught up in the excitement of matching ideas and giving people an enlarged respect for knowledge. He has received much recognition as a magistrate of knowledge, but much is still owing him. He has been criticized for not being enough of an original thinker—but he cannot be faulted for performing the arduous role of dealing with classical thinkers and providing connective tissue for their thoughts. It may not put more bread into men's mouths to know about the logic of Aristotle, nor will it slow down the arms race to know the thoughts of John Stuart Mill and John Locke on the concept of natural rights, nor will it free the oceans of their contamination to comprehend the contrasting views of Kant and Hegel on human purpose. But it will enlarge the capability of the human mind to know the sequence of historical thought and to know how wild dreams are converted into reality. For what is most promising about human life is not just its ability to build towers and bridges but to conceive of new ideas and possibilities.

At a time when increasing numbers of people have a cramped view of education, believing it justifies itself only as it enables a person to generate income, it is heartening to have Mortimer Adler remind us that education makes possible an endless voyage of self-discovery, prepares an individual to respond to experiences that transcend vocational training, rescues tradition from the tedium assigned to it by minds locked into day-to-dayism. In John Dewey's celebrated phrase, education enables individuals to come into full possession of all their powers. Carrying the banner of the liberal arts in an age of clanking functionalism is not easy, but Mortimer Adler does it in grand style. **—N.C.**



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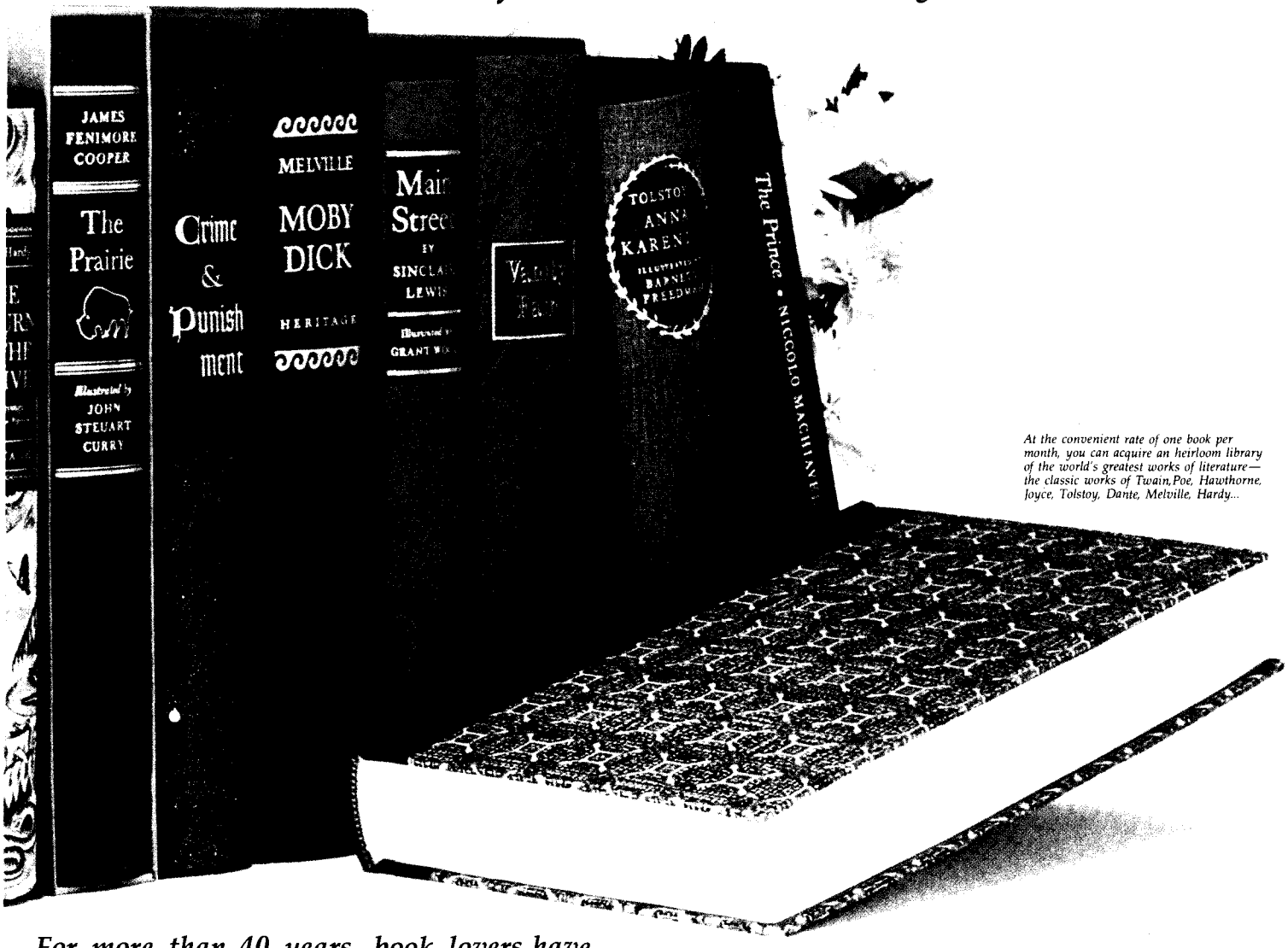

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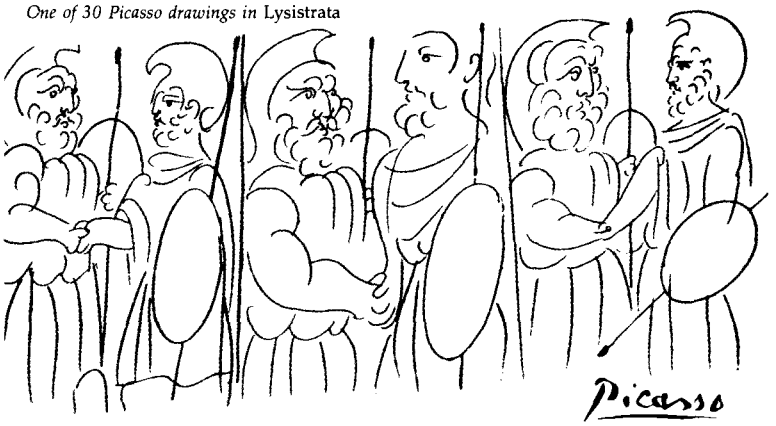

Norman Rockwell's Tom Sawyer

Sherlock Holmes as seen by Frederic Dorr Steele

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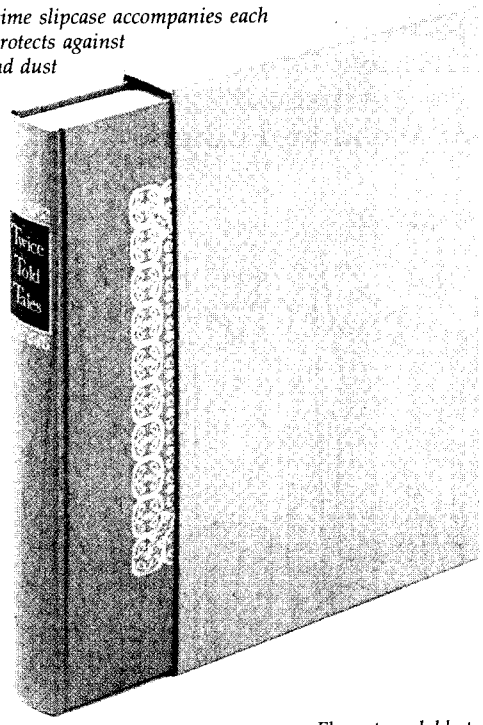

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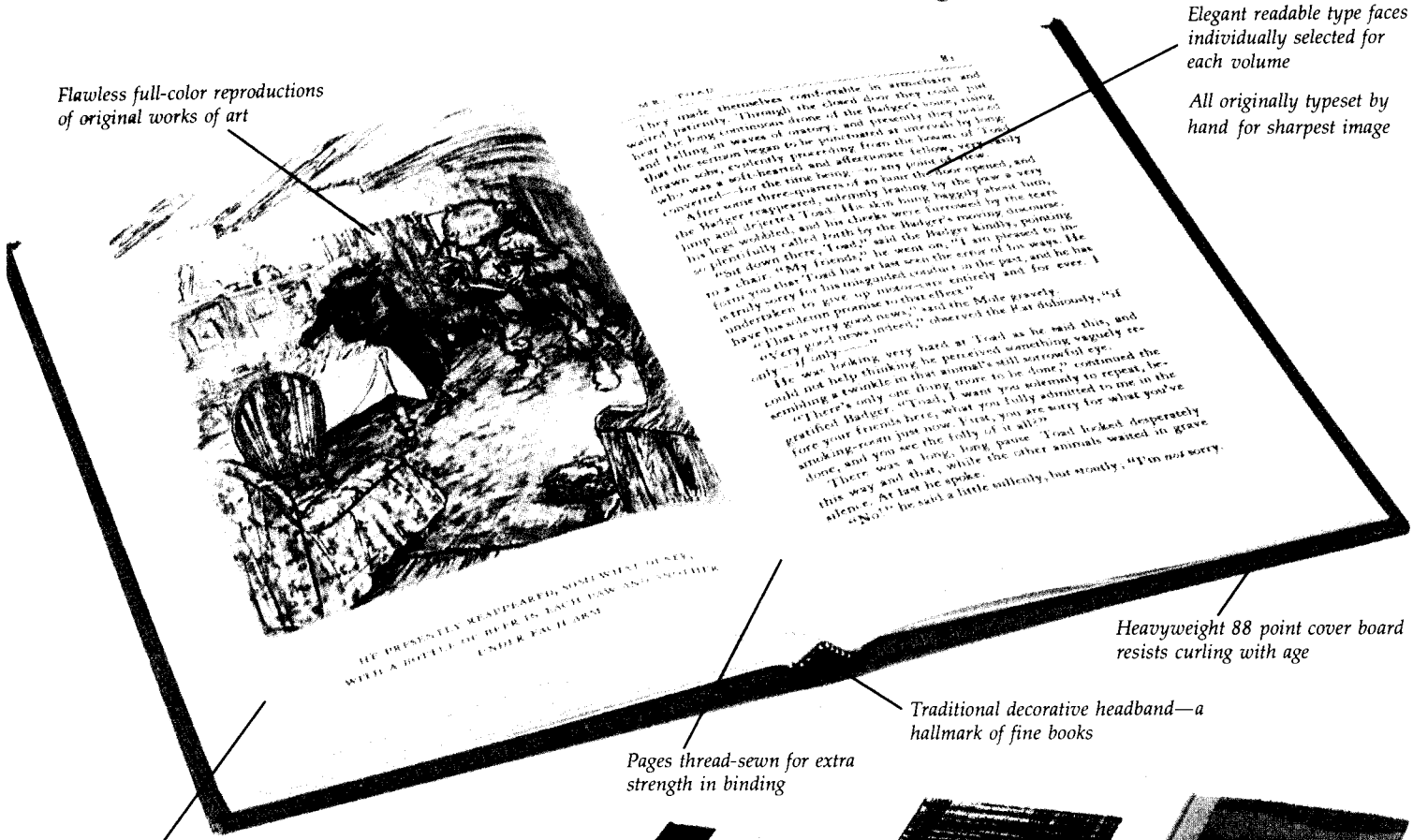

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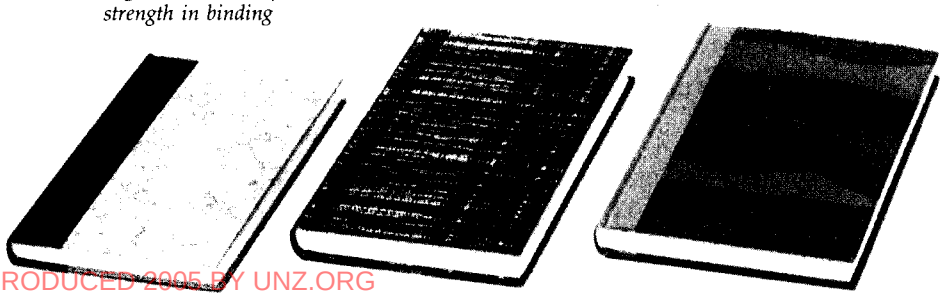

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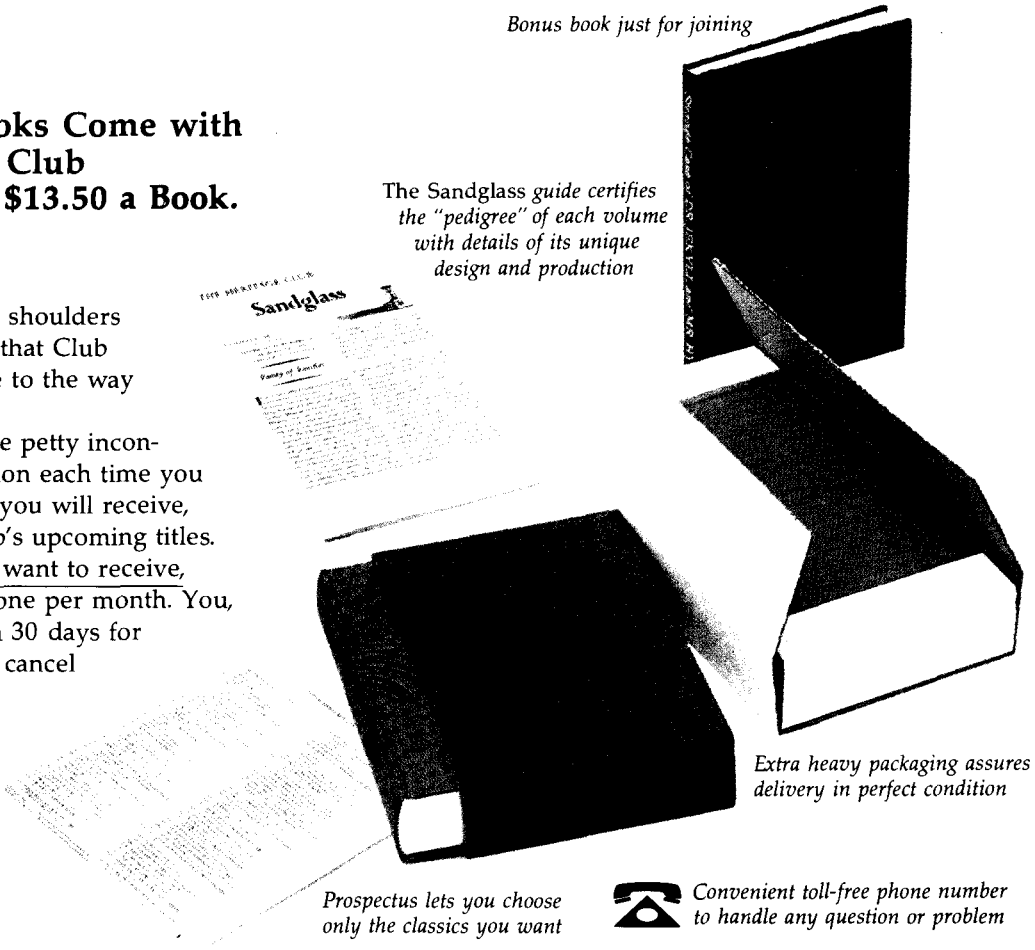

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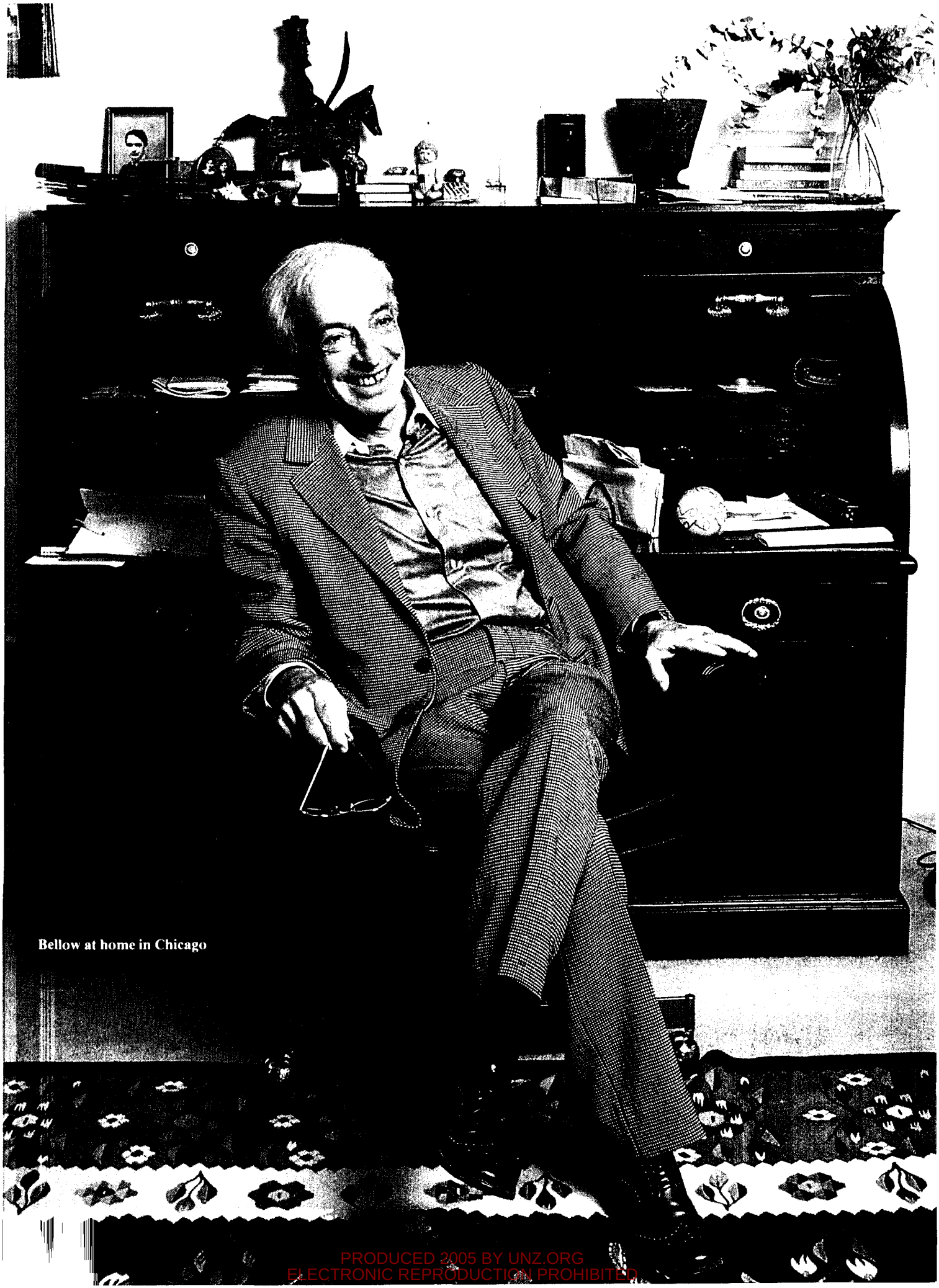

Bellow at home in Chicago

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The Graying of Saul Bellow

At 66, he is our most esteemed novelist. But his new book, "The Dean's December," is drab and tired. What happened to the famous Bellow energy?

BY HELEN DUDAR

Bummidge (the comedian): Oh, Doctor, why can't I live without hope, like everybody else?
The Last Analysis, a play by Saul Bellow

The Dean's December is Saul Bellow's first novel since the Nobel came to him in 1976. An event! Count on a Niagara of attention to the Bellovian landscape. Yes, in the quality-lit game of the academic quarterly, much of which he views with lavish contempt, he is already an adjective. And why not? Bellow is one of our best, the star witness to the cruel comedy of the modern human condition, the tireless scold who never lets us forget how obligingly we exist without hope. What's hard to credit is the slender space his fiction takes up on the shelf; in the 38 years since *Dangling Man*, just eight more novels, a short-story collection, and one out-of-print full-length play he won't allow to be staged. For a man who has spent most mornings of his life tranced over the naked pages of his notebooks, the record is spectacularly modest. A major artist, certainly, but never a pushy one.

How many more aborted manuscripts repose in a locked archive at the University of Chicago, where he still spends two days a week teaching, or have enriched the soil of his city's landfills, Bellow doesn't say. "A great many," he concedes, and that must suffice. He has a healthy disrespect for trivia of a certain kind and may not be pressed for figures. But the detail itself is crucial because to Bellow the difference between his published and his discarded works represents the difference between art and commerce.

Whether art has been served in *The Dean's December* is much in doubt. A strange, bleached autumnal work, it was written—with uncharacteristic speed—in 18 months. Harper & Row, his new publisher, is launching the book later this month with an enthusiastic 75,000-copy first printing, and the Literary Guild is offering it to members. But disappointed noises could be heard last fall from the early audience, among them readers at the Book-of-the-Month Club, which refused it.

It is an infuriatingly uneven book that veers, not without visible effort, from drear to dazzle. The title figure, a dean at a Chicago university, seems a vague image; his wife an embarrassed shadow; the union a partnership founded on emotions as serious as marshmallows. Much of the action takes place in Rumania, and these sequences are rendered in language that is spare, lean, drab, nearly fatigued. Twenty-nine years ago, beginning with *The Adventures of Augie March*, Bellow found a personal voice that struck sparks on the page, something like virtuoso riffs by a classical artist who has mastered jazz. The style—swift, nervous, smart-ass—energized his narrative; it suited the frantic romantics in search of serious purpose: love, life after death, a better character. "So what could I tell this old queen?" wonders Henderson the Rain King, confronting Africa. "That I had ruined the original piece of goods issued to me and was traveling to find a remedy?"

Now, prose and protagonist have been domesticated. Bellow has, he acknowledges, written a novel largely "without flourishes." Certainly the pallor of style is meant to convey the eternal winter of life everywhere, in the Eastern European countries and in America's own damaged cities, matters about which Bellow feels passionately. In the process, however, he has had to suppress his natural style. The talent doesn't abide on a different street in the creative process; it is locked into imagination, into a poetic gift. Suffocate one and you cut off air to everything.

A few pages into the book, you begin hearing the outside voices that are bound to offer their gloating refrain: *Aha, another Nobelist bites the dust.* But the novel's problems really seem to have less to do with the curse of winning than the dread of losing. The tone is so tired; the structure—masterfully seamless in most of his other works—is so patchy, betraying the haste of the writing and the rewriting. It's as if Bellow had agreed to say hello to old age and was now nervously tuned in for the first sound of time's winged chariot at the back door.

Bellow is 66. Depending on his state, he can look jauntily ageless and vigorous—or wasted. In his Chicago apartment one afternoon last fall, during that limbo between the departure of the final corrected galleys and the arrival of the bound books, Bellow folded himself into a tubby black modern chair. He seemed drained, his eyes looking bruised and needy, his small, delicate hands more often quiet than active. An old Chicago friend thought him unusually tired at the time, exhausted by the demands of a lecture series earlier in the year at Oxford, by food poisoning in Spain, by the rush to finish the novel. The final

Helen Dudar is a journalist and critic who writes a syndicated column about books.

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draft, Bellow reports, was polished during a summer in Vermont at some cost: "I raised my blood pressure literally by 30 points, having insomnia and staying up late at night. I would lie awake figuring things out and then, not to disturb my wife, go to the bathroom and make notes."

In Chicago, he lives in a double apartment, a paired co-op with views of the soiled green expanse of Lake Michigan, two kitchens, two dining areas, four bathrooms, and, more to the point, spacious separate working quarters for him and for the fourth Mrs. Saul Bellow. Alexandra Bellow, whom he married in 1975, is a lean, dark-haired, easy-going woman with traces of her Rumanian origins in her speech; she is also a distinguished mathematician, a professor at Northwestern, and, in part, the model for the wife in the new novel.

The Bellow living room has a couple of fine Rumanian rugs on the pale wall-to-wall carpet; a handsome old rolltop desk in modest disarray; a wall of books; a round dining table permanently set with red-and-white mats where he writes in large, elegant, bound notebooks ("My head is full of projects, many more than I am ever going to write out"); a discontinued model of a Smith Corona electric typewriter on which the notebook prose is eventually transferred; a flowering white begonia. Mrs. Bellow reports he is good with green growing things.

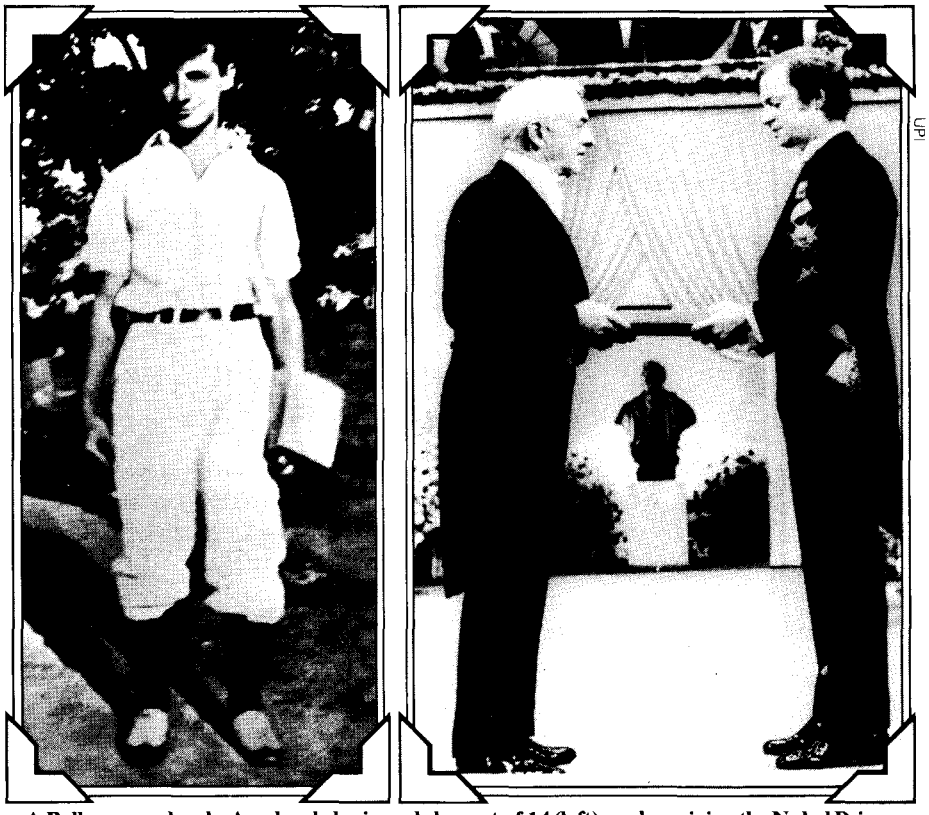
So is Albert Corde, the dean of the new novel, who fusses over the cyclamen plants in a chilly, shabby bedroom in Bucharest, where he is visiting his dying mother-in-law. In this alien time and place, life is suspended. But the present and past crowd and jostle him. There is no hibernation, no refuge from oppression: the oppression of this penitentiary state where the secret-police hack who runs the hospital can bar Corde's wife and family from the bedside of a mortally ill woman; the oppression of life in urban America with its rotting ghettos and its "doomed" black underclass; the oppression of the miseducated young, in Bellow's view, the hip, radical, morally skewed youth of the Western world.

Corde, a former journalist ("basically a bad profession"), is "not quite elderly, but getting there." He is a reformed swinger, a retired womanizer who has at last reached a state of uxoriousness. His wife is an astronomer, a discipline so alien and mysterious—as alien and mysterious as mathematics—that it casts a permanent glow on their union. Corde, "earnest, brooding, heart-struck, time-ravaged," is an imperfect person striving, like all Bellow heroes, to do good, to make himself a "moralist of seeing," and most important, "to disinter reality, retrieve reality, dig it out from the trash."

Back home in Chicago, the results of Corde's efforts to serve reality simmer along without him. He waits to hear the results of the trial of a young black man accused of causing the death of a white student and caught largely through Corde's insistent effort. A militant nephew has disagreed and interfered. An opportunistic cousin, a lawyer, has taken on the defense; having once cheated Corde out of an inheritance, the attorney is—in another of Bellow's brilliant paranoid comic inventions—forever unforgiving. The dean also waits for reactions to two controversial magazine articles he has written on Chicago, a chronicle of the human waste, the terminal squalor, the terror, the official hypocrisy that rules metropolitan America. "It was not so much the inner city slum that threatened us," Corde mourns, "as the slum of the innermost being."

Death loiters at the edges or broods in the center of every Bellow novel, terrifying, senseless, *outrageous*. When it comes to the dean's mother-in-law, there are to be endured the rituals of cremation and burial, each episode awful and touching. Life, as usual, is a Pandora's box of disagreeable surprises. Justice does triumph in the murder case, but injustice is almost casually visited on Corde by a boyhood friend now grown into a celebrated columnist: Dewey Spangler—one of Bellow's inspired names—a wickedly accurate portrait of every smug Washington newspaperman to be found in regular attendance at White House press conferences. After the two men renew their friendship in Bucharest, Spangler writes recklessly about him in a column and Corde ceases to be dean. It is not a serious loss. What eats at Corde is not his failure but ours, our failure to tame anarchy, right wrong, defeat evil, at least to acknowledge the loss of hope. Nobody has ever accused Bellow of wanton optimism.

Just about the only pages in the novel that do leap to life are the Chicago passages, in particular Corde's experiences as he explores the city for his magazine articles: a kidney dialysis session for outpatients, diligently kept alive with expensive equipment while an entire population of abandoned blacks goes down the drain; an encounter, bristling with anguished ambiguities, with a public defender whose client is a black man accused of a horrible sex-murder. Society, Corde laments, will not say "an evil has been done" but rather "an unfortu-



UPI

A Bellow scrapbook: As a book-loving adolescent of 14 (left), and receiving the Nobel Prize for literature from King Carl Gustaf in Stockholm, 1976...

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nate crazed man [has] destroyed a woman."

It is said that any faithful reader of Chicago newspapers will recognize familiar figures and incidents. Bellow is skittish about efforts to comb autobiographical details out of his fiction, and he is right. "It's a composite," is his standard answer to the standard questions about real-life models; the book's Rumania is really "a coalesced vision of all those countries of the Eastern Bloc."

In truth, autobiography does animate every Bellow hero (and old friends live in fear that they will find themselves satirized on the pages of his next novel). In December of 1978, he and Mrs. Bellow traveled, yes to Bucharest, yes to the bedside of her stricken mother. It was a year before he found a way to deal fictionally with death and life at home and abroad. Still, he is not writing true confessions. The business of art, he once said, is to tell audiences, even at the risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own heart. In *The Dean's December*, Albert Corde speaks of himself as an observer "subject to fits of vividness," a phrase that fairly describes Bellow's own acute responses to everyday life; somehow it sits limply on the page of his novel, like an exhausted excuse.

A reader can render no meaner disservice to *December* than returning to earlier Bellow. There is Henderson, "a regular bargain basement of his deformities," with his lusts and his rages and hounding inner voice that chants "I want, I want" in the hole in the middle of the day. The novel proceeds at an exhilarating gallop, and 22 years after publication, it still seems breathtakingly risky, the most successful of Bellow's histories of outsize obsessives.

The half-crazed high-brow Moses Herzog with his unmailed letters to every figure of consequence in the Western world; the nymph-troubled Charlie Citrine of *Humboldt's Gift* with his frenzied longings; the paranoid poet Humboldt, a Mozart of conversation—they are all gorgeous images of eccentric monomaniacs. They are all, as Bellow said of Lustgarten in his short story "Mosby's Memoirs," candidates for resurrection.

Artur Sammler, disfigured by age and the Nazis, is, of course, Bellow's Lazarus, civilized old Europe risen from the dead to discover the dark underside of the New World. In certain circles, it is politically unfashionable, if not downright racist, to admire *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. The women are even more than usually dumb or exasperating or both. Some of his readers have never forgiven Bellow for the disquieting scene in which the stylish black pickpocket of the Broadway bus line exposes himself to Sammler in warning to keep his silence. But the character of the old man, which might have been simply cranky, is so rich, his intelligence so fierce, that he commands attention.

...and with his wife, Alexandra, a professor of mathematics at Northwestern.

Moreover, the intensity of that early scene is matched by Sammler's pain at the attack on the thief at the end. Bellow has never learned to love violence.

It is important to know that while he has taught for the wages and has hustled the lecture circuit for the extra dollar, Bellow says he has never written for bread, never, even through the times he was awash in legal bills and under siege by his next-to-last wife in an amazing 13-year money war that used up his $160,000 Nobel award. It ended last year. "God bless her. I hope now she's appeased," he pronounces with a kind of willful cheer that calls up Charlie Citrine thriving on adversity.

A seasoned writer, he goes on to explain, can turn out work for easy profit in several ways. One is to compose to a detailed plan, a patent impossibility for him; another is to work on automatic pilot, "to let your habits master you," a peril for almost any experienced author.

"You can continue for the rest of your life to do things that way, if the object is to turn out passably skillful books," he says mildly. From time to time, Bellow has found himself with a narrative that "was never going to open up plausibly, never going to afford space for the only thing that really interests me—to fill up, to use my emotional and other capacities. Otherwise, I don't really much care. Yes, I could have written lots of other books. It would have been easy for me. Why not?" The light voice pales to a near-whisper, as if he were talking to himself. "I could have been much richer than I am."

He is merely well off, because at some point midway through a novel, Bellow has found himself at a dead end: "Either my assumptions were wrong or the people were wrong or the setting was wrong. Something was wrong, and I was too dumb to know it until I had worked on it for a year or so."

It is impossible to say how painful such failures must be for Bellow. He wears his humor like a bullet-proof vest. He is steadily, insistently funny. Indeed, because he is a writer of high purpose, critics often forget how vividly comic his fiction can be. He has an extraordinary memory—for smells, for sounds, for the feeling of common places, for every good line he's ever written, for every old joke he's ever read. On the subject of an abandoned work, we get—to an explosion of laughter that pares a decade from his face—an old joke about the American tenor who is asked to sing an aria again and again by his Italian audience.

"Finally, somebody says to him, 'You're going to sing until you get it right,' Sometimes, writing is like that. You're going to sing until you get it right."

He looks back with some displeasure on *Augie March*, an exuberant sprawl of a novel that, he has said, shows all too plainly the abandon with which a writer half his age cut loose from the formal restraints of narrative. Among the novels he got right, *Henderson* is a special favorite, and Bellow will take it down from the shelf to cheer himself with a few pages when he does not require the consolation of the language of the King James Bible or Blake or Shakespeare.

The Bible was one of the seminal events of his eighth year, a period that provided Bellow with a nearly complete education in suffering. In 1924, an appendectomy, followed by peritonitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy, landed him in a children's public TB ward in Quebec, where he was born. Charlie Citrine, who also began life in Quebec and also nearly ended it in a TB

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ward, remembers how children "hemorrhaged in the night and choked on blood and were dead."

"I learned about death there," Bellow says, "I learned about sickness there, I learned about mortal fear there, and I learned about anti-Semitism."

He was the outsider, a scrawny little Jewish boy whose Russian-born parents were more at home in Yiddish than English. He was literate enough to read the dire assessments on the chart at the foot of his bed and to learn about the dreadful fate of Jesus Christ. Someone gave him a New Testament. "It scared the hell out of me," he says heavily. "The crime of the Jews against the Savior—I was all broken up about it. The murder of this beloved person by a harsh enemy was terrible. It was all mixed up with the funny papers people brought—Mutt and Jeff, Boob McNutt, the Katzenjammer kids—they were all sadistic comics."

Out of the hospital, Bellow took stock of his physical state—he was frail and weighed about 45 pounds—decided he was not going to be a sickly child and began a program of body-building developed out of library books. He has seldom been ill since. When he was nine, his parents moved their four children to Chicago. Through a life of wandering, he has always come back. "The contempt center of the USA," Albert Corde calls it with fond disapprobation.

In Bellow's youth, the el trip to and from classes, first at the University of Chicago, later at Northwestern, took 90 minutes each way, and he appears to have spent them in fevered studies of masters of the English novel—Joyce, Conrad, Defoe, among others. Their books were read not by the chapter or even by the page, but paragraph by paragraph, sometimes the same paragraph for an entire trip. Bellow, as pupil, was learning style as a function of narrative. He is not merely widely read but well read in a way rarely achieved even by writers of his stature or by the critics he disdainfully classifies as Certified Intellectuals.

Bellow's devout view, implanted at school, is that "the teaching of literature has been a disaster." He was and is repelled by "pseudo learned interpretation," the academic habit of elaborate exegesis that intimidates the common reader and stands between him and the author's work. The student Bellow, in temporary flight from literature, began graduate anthropology studies at the University of Wisconsin, abandoned them to marry, and set out to become a writer. In an essay a few years ago, he recalled the late 1930s when he spent his days in the back bedroom of his mother-in-law's house trying to become "a performing and interpretive creature."

"I loved great things," he wrote. "I thought I had a right to think of that exalted game. I was also extremely proud, ornery, and stupid."

His first published short works began appearing in 1941. *Dangling Man* came in 1944 and *The Victim* in 1947, each a signal to the literati that a major talent was on the scene. They were his "European" novels, spare, carefully constructed, formal narratives. Toward the end of the decade, a Guggenheim grant freed him for an extended sojourn abroad, and in Paris he began to find his new voice, a cunning blend of Mandarin and English as it was spoken in Chicago streets, sometimes by speakers who had grown up with the inflections and rhythms of Yiddish. It does not, he insists, express a Jewish writer—no matter how often he is so classified—but a hybrid, born of immigrant parents, bilingual, shaped by European thought and literature and an American education.

In the rush to finish the novel, Bellow raised his blood pressure by 30 points, developed insomnia, and stayed up late at night.

Augie March appeared in 1953 and won a National Book Award, the first of three. He had, by then, sired a son, also the first of three, one per each marriage. Until he settled down to his fourth marriage, Bellow was trailed by a reputation for a broad and wandering appreciation for the company of ladies. In those early years, he had also embarked on a remarkably restless round of academia, a semester here, a year there.

To the trophies have been added a Pulitzer and, of course, the Nobel, with its attendant burdens. Bellow has always understood that the Nobel laurels can sprout thorns and that Americans, in particular, wear them badly, like provincials. Neither Sinclair Lewis nor John Steinbeck flourished after their Nobels. "Well-meaning people were forever telling me, 'I guess you've shot your bolt,'" Bellow says with a short laugh. "I may have, but we have no evidence."

Richard Stern, the Chicago novelist and an old friend, recalls that the pressures from strangers seeking his help to get to Bellow at the time of the award became intolerable. Ferociously self-protective, Bellow has never allowed himself to become an American cultural house pet. An assistant deals with his mail; Bellow politely declines such tributes as honorary degrees with their concomitant demands for commencement addresses. "Nobody," he says, quoting George Safaris, another Nobelist, "has the right to throw you in a sea of empty responsibilities."

A university job is no longer an economic necessity, but he still teaches—for the intellectual companionship, for the sake of silencing the anxious afternoon voice that begins intoning "I want, I want" when the writing stops. "Life," he gloomily remarked to Stern one day, "is just a series of long afternoons." He dislikes the literary scene—the cultural "gangs," as he calls them, with their ephemeral cultural fashions—which is just as well, since Chicago doesn't have one.

As a teacher, he offers the special vision of a gifted man of letters. A former student, a member of a graduate study group that once spent a full term at Chicago on *Gulliver's Travels*, says Bellow permanently transformed the way he read. "I can remember two-hour sessions on a single paragraph," says Michael Deneny, now an editor at St. Martin's Press. "He would show you alternative ways Swift could have written one sentence, why he chose the words he used and their order. No one had ever taught me the structure and mechanics of prose on that level."

In general, Bellow's students find him helpful, accessible, touchy, finicky. Famously a dandy, Bellow was once so embarrassed to find that a pen had leaked into the pocket of his custom-made shirt that he canceled his class. To the militant radicals among his students, Bellow's conservative views are cause of dudgeon. In the easy atmosphere of a popular Chinese restaurant near the university, Deneny remembers, one could, with impunity, denounce him as reactionary or worse.

But it never does to presume. Bellow mentioned the other day that on his rare encounters with Mayor Jane Byrne, she has called him Saul. He, of course, calls her Your Honor. He believes in the forms. After all, what else is there? ■

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NOW	Less than 0.01mg	1mg	Less than 0.01mg	2mg
CARLTON	Less than 0.01mg	1mg*	1mg	5mg
CAMBRIDGE	Less than 0.1mg	1mg	· · ·	4mg
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Simon Estes Comes Home

The grandson of a slave, he has spent the last 16 years in Europe developing into one of the world's best opera singers. He'll finally make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera House this month. Did racism hold him back?

BY MARK STEINBRINK

Simon Estes strides powerfully across the living room of his apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side, his strapping arms piled high with laundry, and smiles at Yvonne, his young Swiss bride of one year. "We help each other in our respective jobs," he explains, looking like nothing so much as a good-natured football linebacker. "She helps me with my career, and I help her with the housework. My job around the house happens to be the laundry."

This husky, six-foot two-inch house-husband also happens to be one of the world's foremost bass-baritones, and he is certainly the world's foremost bass-baritone who is black. His rich, powerful voice, with its particular beauty in the upper-middle register, has made him a much sought-after Wagner singer in recent years. Soprano Birgit Nilsson calls him the best Wotan of the day, and accolades like "splendid," "grand," and "haunting" fall from his newspaper reviews like snowflakes.

But despite Estes's obvious vocal talent, his route to the top has been a difficult one, and Estes lays the blame for most of his difficulties on racism. The early years of his career were spent making his name in Europe because, Estes claims, American companies were not—and in many cases are still not—hospitable to the success of a black man. And although for the last four years Estes has been singing leading roles in most major European opera houses and has recently been invited to sing in many important American productions, this January 4 will be the first time the 44-year-old New Yorker will be appearing in a full-length production at his country's top house, the Metropolitan Opera. He did step into a show at the last minute during a Met tour in 1976, and last April he sang in a concert version of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, Act III; but his performance in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* this month will be his Met debut in an evening-length work. "It's taken me a long time to come home," says Estes with a grin. "Actually, 16 years longer than it should have taken, but I'm very happy finally to be here."

Estes as Amonasro in the San Francisco Opera's 1981 staging of Verdi's *Aïda*.

Estes's life story is dramatic enough to form a libretto of its own. The grandson of a slave who was sold for $500 just before Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Estes was born into a working-class black family in Centerville, Iowa, in 1938. His father was a hotel porter, coal miner, and sometime janitor. "In those days," says Estes, "a black man still couldn't sit downstairs in a movie theater or go into an ice-cream parlor, things that everyone who's not black takes for granted. When you're a child, that kind of thing hurts very much."

Although Estes's father had no more than a third-grade education, he realized the importance of an education for his children. "All through my youth," Estes says, "my mother and father were constantly stressing the need to go to college. 'Whatever else people can take away from you,' my father would say, 'they can't take away what's in your head.'"

Estes and three of his four siblings realized their parents' dream, Simon enrolling at the University of Iowa with the intention of becoming a doctor. When he was 23, his father died, and he suddenly became the sole support of his family. Not only was he a full-time student, he worked eight hours a day, and the family lived in a basement.

In 1960, Estes decided to start singing. "I had sung in our church choir as a kid," says the baritone, "and just suddenly wanted to start again." He tried to get into the 300-voice University of Iowa

Mark Steinbrink is a freelance writer specializing in the arts.

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Simon Estes at the Met—at last.

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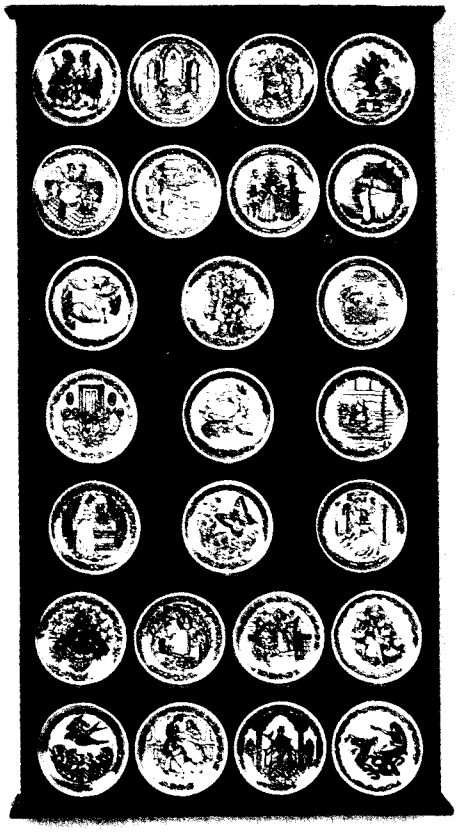

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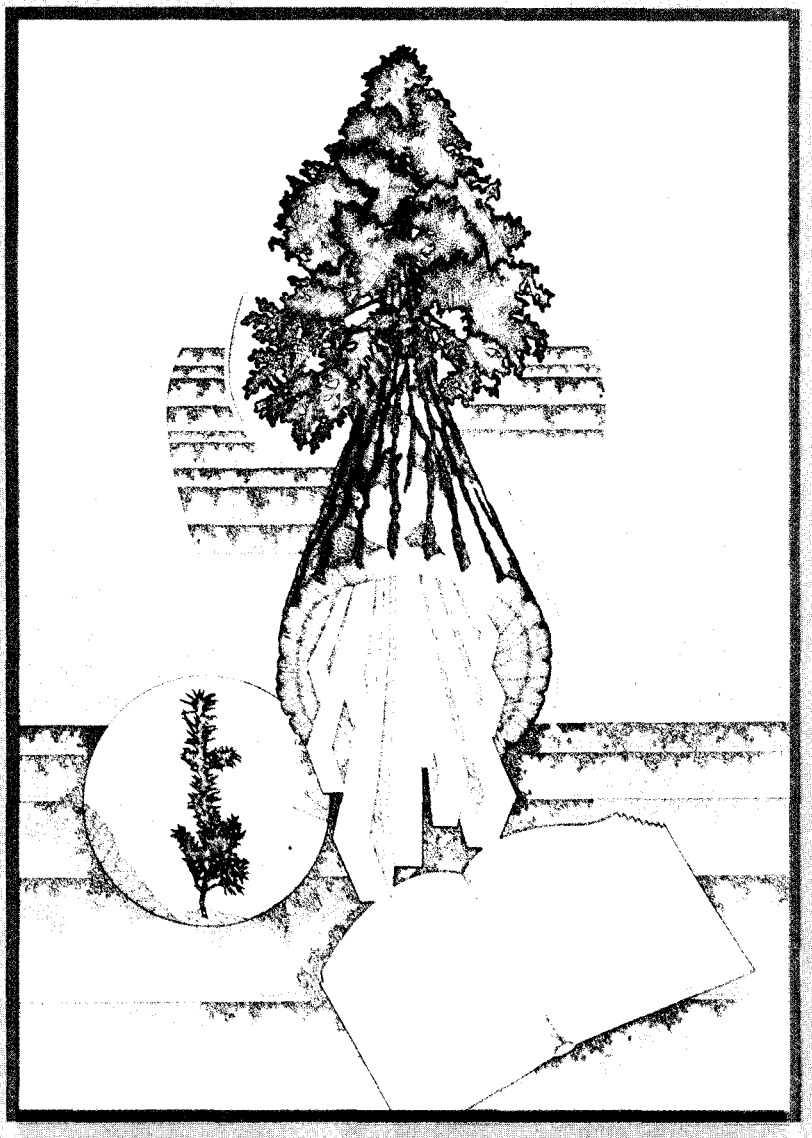

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choir, but the director didn't think his voice was good enough. The director suggested instead that he sing with a smaller campus group, the Old Gold Singers, that specialized in popular songs. Charles Kellis, a voice teacher at the university, heard Estes sing with the group and convinced him to start taking lessons. "Kellis changed my life," Estes says with obvious affection. It was Kellis who introduced Estes to the world that he inhabits today. "When Kellis told me that he thought I could sing opera," Estes says, "my response was, 'What's opera?' I really didn't know. That kind of musical naiveté wasn't really that unusual in Iowa in those days. The only classical music I knew were the snatches I'd hear occasionally on the radio. Kellis, however, started giving me records of the great singers: Callas, Price, Hines. And in no time I was hooked."

Kellis encouraged his pupil to audition at Juilliard. He did, winning not only a Rockefeller grant but a full scholarship. To help support himself, Estes worked in the cafeteria there and later as a tour guide in the new Lincoln Center complex then going up next door.

The next year at Christmas, Estes wanted to visit his girl friend, a Juilliard graduate then living in Germany, but he had no money. So he arranged an audition with a European agent and applied for a grant from the NAACP. Although the NAACP didn't have a specific program for aspiring singers, the office workers were so taken with the personable young bass that they took up their own collection and gave Estes $300. The New York Community Trust Fund contributed the rest, and Estes was off.

The European agent liked what he heard and set up an audition for Estes at the Deutsche Oper in West Berlin. The company immediately signed him to a contract, and in April 1965, Simon Estes made his professional stage debut in Berlin—not in a comprimario role but singing Ramfis, the principal bass role in Verdi's *Aïda*. "I had never sung on a stage before," he says incredulously, "and to make things even worse I didn't have any rehearsal. I hadn't even seen the conductor until the curtain parted and I saw him in the pit." Estes's Ramfis was well received and he sang for 10 months in Berlin, learning the repertory and gaining much needed stage experience.

In 1966, he returned to America penniless and in need of work. Someone suggested that he try the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow. And Estes, never one to cower before the unknown, agreed. He got back on a plane and went to Moscow. The Tchaikovsky competition requires that a singer perform several works in Russian, and Estes didn't speak any Russian at all. Luckily, the woman sitting next to him on the plane was a Russian actress, and she taught him his first Russian song, Tchaikovsky's "Not a Word, Oh My Friend," which Estes later sang in the first round of the competition. His Russian repertory grew quickly once in Moscow, and he ended by winning the bronze medal.

Later that year, back in the U.S., his American career began to get going. He was asked by Kurt Herbert Adler to sing the four villains in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* in San Francisco, and the next year he sang Colline in *La Bohème* there. In 1968 he sang Figaro for Sarah Caldwell in Boston, and in 1969 he sang Banquo in Verdi's *Macbeth* with the Chicago Lyric. In 1972 he was back in San Francisco for additional performances.

"I should have been singing at the Met in 1966," says Estes, "and I would have, had I been white."

But while he sang recital and symphony engagements, no additional operatic assignments were forthcoming. This, says Estes, was because of racism, pure and simple. He launches energetically into a long catalogue of abuses suffered at the hands of white opera administrators. "Grace Bumbry and I wanted to do *Carmen* at Covent Garden (the only major house that I've never sung in—again a racial thing), but the administration said they simply couldn't have two blacks on the stage. The English director Peter Hall won't use me in his 1983 production of the *Ring* at Bayreuth. 'How can a black man play a Nordic God?' he asked.

"The facts have to be faced," Estes says. "There just aren't black men singing on opera-house stages today. And I'm convinced that it's because of racism in opera-house administrations. Black women have had an easier time of it, perhaps because white administrators don't feel threatened by the sight of a black woman in the arms of a white man. They do, however, seem to feel threatened by seeing a black man make love to a white woman, and they've never been able to accept it. Although it's better now, I think it's still an issue. The problem, I fear, is basically a sexual one."

Even the Met, Estes feels, has taken this long to engage him because of racial squeamishness. "I should have been singing at the Met in 1966," he says, "right after I won the Tchaikovsky competition, and I would have, had I been white."

Joan Ingpen, assistant manager of the Met, doesn't accept Estes's view. "We don't care what color an artist is, the only thing we're concerned with is how well he sings." She points out that in the time she has been there, the Met offered Estes two previous contracts, both of which he refused.

"Actually, I was offered parts at the Met in 1977," says Estes, "when I was preparing for the *Dutchman* in Zurich. But the roles they offered were laughable; little comprimario parts like the King in *Aïda* or a soldier in *Salome*. Here I was, singing leads in Europe and they expected me to do that! They graciously offered to groom me. But since I had already been singing major roles for 16 years in Europe, I graciously declined."

Estes insists, however, that he's not bitter. "My mother taught me as a child never to hate," he says. "Those who hate are the unlucky ones because they don't know how to love. Progress has been made in America since the 1960s but there's still a long way to go. Things aren't so bad for blacks in Europe as they are in America—Europeans aren't as concerned about color—but I don't want to go back to Europe. I intend to stay in my own country and fight to make things better."

Even in success, Estes feels he hasn't been able to escape racial stereotyping. After his big break in 1977 when he was asked to sing Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* in Zurich, he opened Bayreuth the next year (becoming the first black man to appear in the opera house built by Richard Wagner, a man not known for his enlightened racial views). But in the Bayreuth production, by Harry Kupfer, the Dutchman enters in chains, hanging from the bow of his ship. He also spends much of the evening crawling about on his knees.

"Kupfer's staging doesn't make any sense," says Estes. "The Dutchman is a rich man with a huge ship; why should he be portrayed in chains? I suspect that Kupfer had just seen *Roots*—which had just come out then—and had decided to make it into an opera. What could be more appropriate: a black man in chains

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like the slave ships of old!" Despite Estes's moral objections to the production, it did serve to launch him professionally. After the Kupfer *Dutchman*, Estes was asked to sing the same role in most of the major houses in Europe.

No doubt Estes's struggles against racism have been real. Many will concede that 16 years was a long time for a singer of his ability to wait before singing at the Met. Still, a period of European apprenticeship is not unusual for young American singers. Many of today's best artists spent years abroad learning the operatic ropes. In Europe small opera houses abound, and consequently, so do performing opportunities.

Estes seems to attribute his sudden success at Bayreuth and the consequent upswing of his career to some gradual racial thaw. There are, however, simple vocal explanations. Roles like the Dutchman and Wotan in Wagner's *Die Walküre* lie in the higher, more brilliant part of Estes's vocal range or tessitura. Although he's making his Metropolitan debut as the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*, a bass part, the roles he's engaged to sing thereafter all lie higher in his range where, most critics agree, Estes's voice is simply more beautiful. "The higher part of my range," says Estes with a grin, "has just been 'happening' in the last few years. I don't seem to have lost the lower notes of my register. That's unusual. Often when a voice rises, the lower part of it goes. Of course, I'm very pleased."

Estes recently married a Swiss kindergarten teacher whom he met while singing in Switzerland. "Yvonne and I have a wonderful relationship," he says. We discuss everything, so we almost never disagree. And we can't wait to have kids."

Estes is very interested in children. Because he vividly remembers what it was like to struggle in school, he established a Simon Estes Scholarship Fund at the University of Iowa. Although most of the recipients have been black, the scholarships are not strictly determined along racial lines. When his busy performing schedule permits, Estes also likes to lecture to schools and youth groups about the things that matter to him: music, religion, racial understanding.

But most of all, Simon Estes likes to sing. "When I sing," says Estes, swelling and looking regally around the room like the modern-day version of the Egyptian high priest Ramfis, his first role in opera, "I feel that I have a mission. Artists are doctors, and when I sing," he continues, taking his young wife's hand tenderly in his, "I feel that I can heal your ills. And that to me makes life worth living." ■

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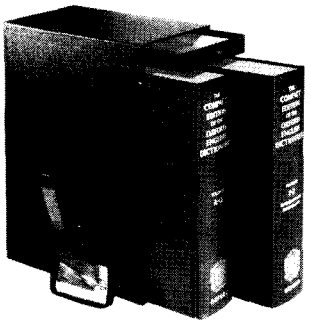

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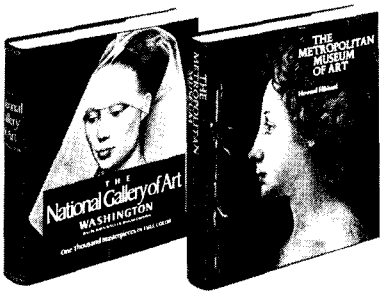

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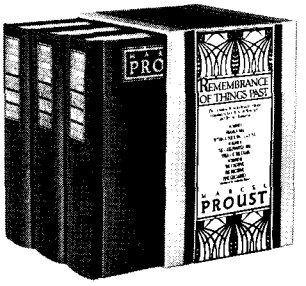

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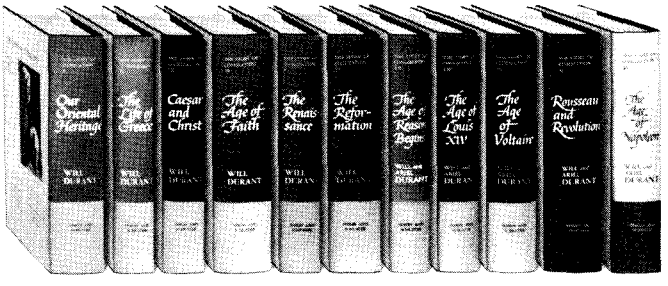

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The Rage for Cowboy Art

In the Western states, prices are soaring for contemporary paintings that depict cowboy and Indian themes. The best Western artists are now ready to storm the ramparts of the Eastern Establishment.

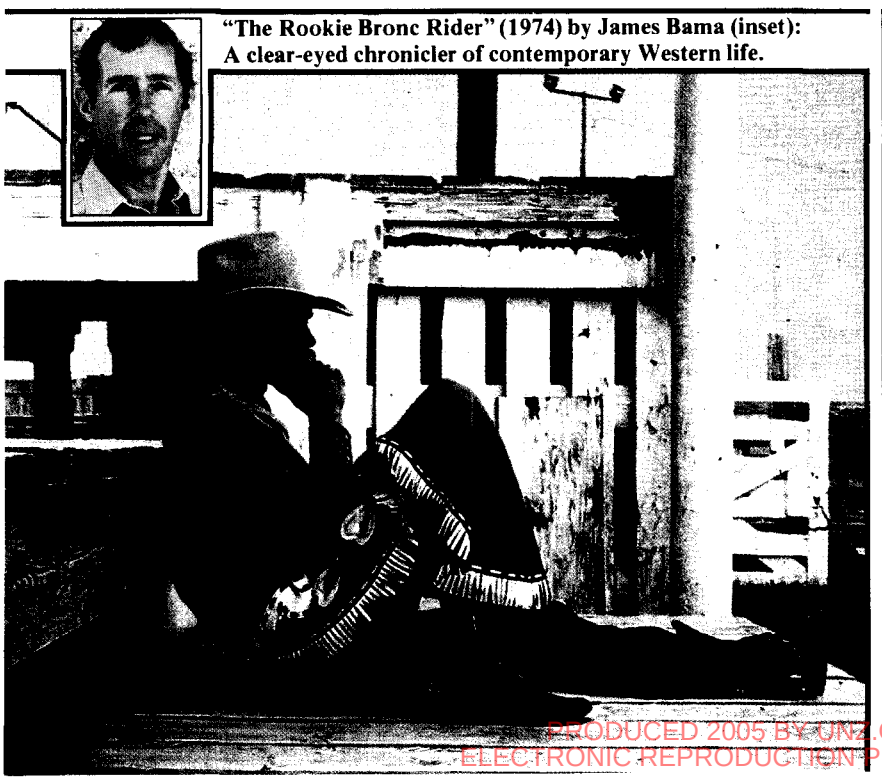
BY JOSHUA GILDER

You can tell a successful cowboy artist by the boots that line the floor of his closet: snakeskin, elephant ear, lizard, eel, and the aristocrat of cowboy boots, ostrich, the ones all covered with little black bumps where they pulled out the feathers. Gary Niblett, at 38 the youngest member of the prestigious Cowboy Artists of America, has his boots custom-made. He pulls up his jeans leg to reveal a shiny black expanse of sharkskin running up the length of his calf. "It's real important," he explains, "to get the high ones that come right below the bend in your knee."

Not, as you might think, to keep out scorpions. This is purely a question of fashion. These are "party" boots, for wearing to occasions like the annual Western Heritage Sale, an auction of Western art held every spring in the lobby of the Shamrock Hilton in downtown Houston. Attended by big oil money, big cattle money, and prominent politicians (John Connally, a long-time enthusiast of Western art, is a sponsor), the sale is held in high Texas style: Prime beef cattle and prize quarterhorses take turns on the auction block with paintings by the most popular Western artists. Last year a medium-sized oil by Clark Heulings went for a record $310,000, the most ever paid at auction for the work of a living artist. Some grumbling was heard that Jim Fowler, the Phoenix art dealer who made the winning bid, already owned some 20 Heulings and was trying to inflate the value of his stock. ABC's *20/20* was there to interview him, and one Santa Fe dealer remarked that if Fowler had known that he was going to be on TV, he would have bid a million.

Whatever Fowler's ambitions, the Western art market hardly needed his added boost. In the last five years, prices for Western art have started to soar with

Joshua Gilder is an associate editor of *Saturday Review*.



"The Rookie Bronc Rider" (1974) by James Bama (inset): A clear-eyed chronicler of contemporary Western life.

"Dust of Many Pony Soldiers" (1981) by Howard Terpning (inse In the tradition of Charles Russell and Frederic Remington.

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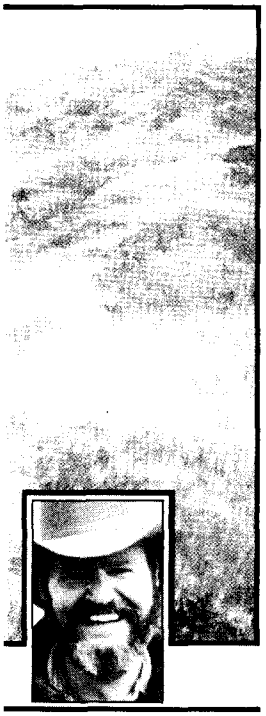
no end in sight. At the same auction, an oil by Tom Lovell sold for $191,000 and the year before one by John Clymer sold for $100,000. The boom is all the more striking considering that 20 years ago Western art had virtually no market at all. A few isolated artists plied their lonely trade, with no public to mention and absolutely no critical recognition.

Gordon Snidow, famous for the Coors cowboy poster that adorns just about every store in the West that sells beer, says that when he was starting out, there was only one gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona, that handled cowboy art. Now there are more than 30, and other centers have grown up in neighboring Phoenix and around the Santa Fe-Taos axis. The movement has matured to the point where it has even begun to spawn its own criticism, and several magazines have sprung up to cover the art and events: *Artists of the Rockies / Golden West*, *Art West*, *The Santa Fean*, and others. Popular artists can't paint fast enough to keep up with the demand for paintings that regularly sell for $30,000 to $50,000, and often tell of being booked two or three years in advance. Western artists are learning the pleasures and perils of celebrityhood; they appear on the Merv Griffin show with Burt Reynolds (an avid collector), go trail riding with Clint Eastwood, and party with Linda Grey of *Dallas*. Many also find themselves for the first time in their lives in the position of having their taxes audited.

To some extent, the success of these contemporary artists is a reflection of what Peter B. Rathbone, head of the American Painting Department at Sotheby Parke Bernet, calls the "explosive" growth of 19th-century Western art. Once extremely popular, Western art went into a long decline that lasted well into the 1960s. Frederic Remington's bronze "Coming Through the Rye" (of which only five of the 12 or so that were cast are still in private hands) sold 20 years ago for $12,000. In 1972 it brought $175,000, then a record price for an American bronze. Today, Rathbone estimates, it could easily bring $500,000, and Remington oils have already hit the $1-million mark. These prices, in turn, are part of the increased popularity of all American art. Rathbone points out that his department recently passed the Impressionists, until then the most popular, in its total number of subscribers. Certainly Americans in general are showing an increased interest in their heritage, and this plays a part in the overall expansion of the market.

Contemporary Western art, however, has grown up independently of the art Establishment. Most major Eastern museums and galleries have to this day remained completely indifferent: An exhibition of cowboy art being organized out West is having trouble finding a home for a planned visit to New York City in 1983. Many critics refuse even to recognize Western art as art. In a real sense the growth of Western art is a popular movement, and it is one particularly tuned to the country's *Volksgeist*. If existing museums won't hang cowboy art, enthusiasts will build their own. Ex-Governors Connally and Dolph Briscoe of Texas and Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona are all honorary chairmen of a new museum in Kerrville, Texas, being built especially to house the work of the Cowboy Artists of America.

When people in the West speak of Western art, they mean realist art with Western themes or subject matter. In the forefront of Western artists are those who call themselves cowboy artists, and the elite of this group are the members of the Cowboy Artists of America. Non-members such as Clark Heulings, whose work tends more toward Mexican village scenes, and Wilson Hurley, a painter of panoramic Western landscapes, credit the CAA with opening up the Western market. The CAA was founded in Sidona, Arizona, in 1965. Five artists, gathered together at the Oak Creek Tavern before starting out on a trail ride, decided to form an association, styling their bylaws on those of the Sidona Sheriff's Posse. They outlined several objectives, among them "to perpetuate the memory and culture of the Old West as typified by Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and others," and "to insure the authentic representation of the life of the West, as it was and as it is."



"Headin' for the Barn" (1981) by Gordon Snidow (inset): Celebrating the frontier spirit—painting people, as Remington once described it, "with the bark still on them."

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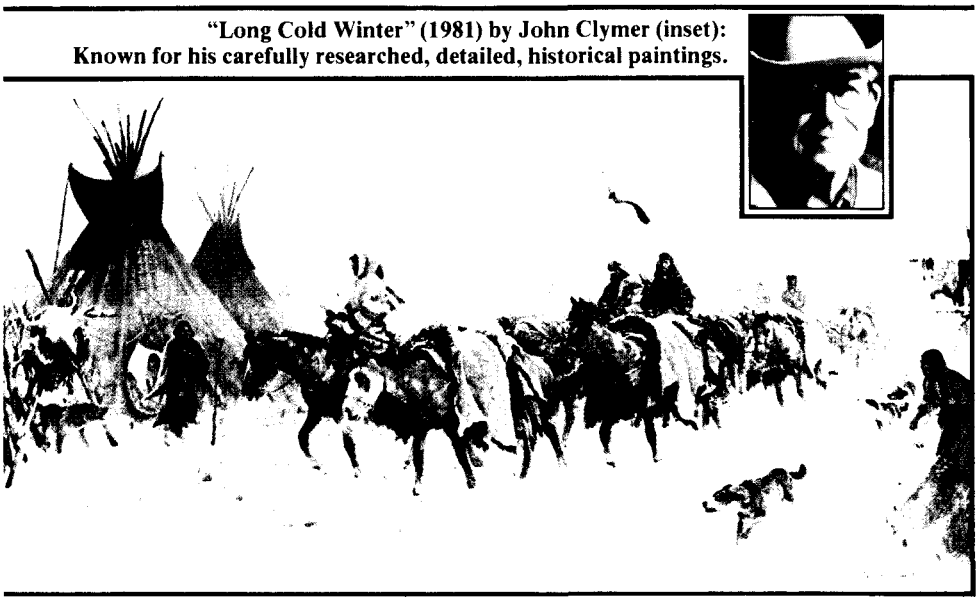


"Long Cold Winter" (1981) by John Clymer (inset): Known for his carefully researched, detailed, historical paintings.

The artists of the CAA emulate Remington's and Russell's action-filled paintings, blending a romantic vision of the Old West with an historically accurate depiction of that way of life: Every saddle girth is tied correctly, every feather in an Indian's war bonnet is in place and of the proper species. In Howard Terpning's "Dust of Many Pony Soldiers," for instance, an anthropologist could tell by the warriors' clothing which tribe they belonged to.

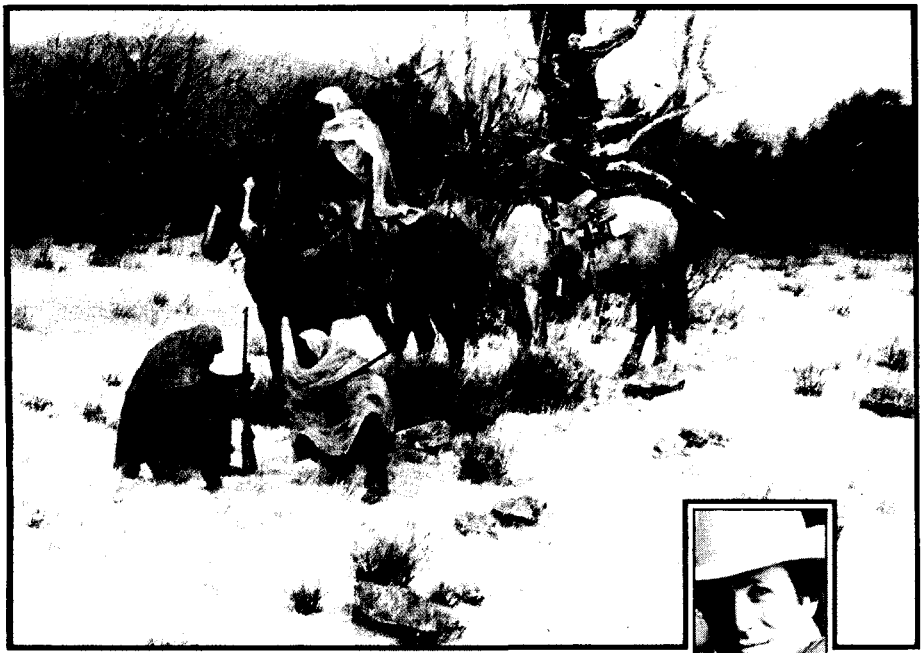
The CAA decided early on that the subject matter of cowboy artists was to be cowboys. This included, by extension, Indians, and the mountain men that Harvey Johnson has made his specialty—but not landscapes and animal pictures. It was also felt that cowboy artists should be cowboys as well as artists, so today, with their membership grown to 23, the CAA still gets together every year for a week-long trail ride.

The success of the CAA has inspired the formation of several other artists' associations, among them the National Association of Western Artists, the Northwest Rendezvous Group, and Women Artists of the American West. Still, membership in the CAA remains the most coveted: The "CA" brand after an artist's signature automatically raises the value of his painting several thousand dollars, and the increased visibility of the annual CAA show can only help sales. But mostly it's a matter of pride. Gary Niblett wears a special "CA" belt buckle big enough to sink him like a stone if he ever fell in the water. Harvey Johnson will lovingly show you his Colt six shooter, one of a limited series made by Colt especially for the Cowboy Artists. It has ivory handles and elegant gold engraving on its coal-black steel, and though it has perfect balance, it would seem a sacrilege to shoot the thing.

Cowboy art, like any school of art, varies widely in quality. Five artists stand out, either for the quality of their work, the prices they command, or both:

• **Gordon Snidow**, 44, is perhaps the best cowboy artist around today. He has a lucrative contract with Coors beer that dates back to 1979 when the company spotted his painting, "Colorado Kool-aid," a picture of a cowboy taking a break from bronco busting with a can of Coors beer in his hand. A native of the Southwest, Snidow now lives near the Jicarilla Apache reservation in Ruidoso, New Mexico. In places like this there are still real-life cowboys outside of rodeos, and it is their life that Snidow depicts in his excellent gouaches. Snidow avoids the criticism sometimes leveled at his colleagues—that their historical paintings are derivative of Russell and Remington—by painting only his contemporaries, giving his paintings an immediacy and importance absent from paintings that draw their subject matter from the past. His handling of paint, especially in his figures, is sometimes reminiscent of Norman Rockwell, whom Snidow considers one of the great American populist artists; but Snidow's own work goes far beyond illustration with his sophisticated handling of light and his perceptive characterization. "Headin' for the Barn" (which sold for $40,000) won the 1981 gold medal for "other media" at the CAA show.

• **Gary Niblett** is the rising star of the CAA. Niblett is a cowboy born and bred, and he has a scar above his right eye, given him by a Brahmin bull in his first and last rodeo, to prove it. ("I was doing just fine," he says, "until they opened the gate.") After school, Niblett moved to Los Angeles where he worked as a background artist on such cartoon classics as *The Flintstones* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, devoting all of his spare hours to his serious painting. It was in Los Angeles that he met his beautiful Polish-émigrée wife, Monika. She and their young daughter often pose for Niblett; together they make up the mourning family in "Typhoid," the hit of last year's CAA show. Niblett, whose paintings sell for up to $30,000, paints contemporary scenes



"On the Trail of the Deer" (1981) by Gary Niblett (inset): A contemporary scene of Indian hunters in New Mexico.

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as well. "On the Trail of the Deer" is a modern-day scene of Indian hunters on the reservation near his home in Angel Fire, New Mexico. Niblett's work is infused with a sense of the land and a simple, direct relation to the people among whom he grew up.

• **Howard Terpning**, 54, grew up in Missouri, Iowa, and Texas. The newest member of the CAA, he has already collected his share of medals and awards; "Dust of Many Pony Soldiers," which sold for $47,000, won him Best of Show award at last November's annual CAA show. The past six years, Terpning has devoted much of his time to painting historical pictures of the Plains Indians, whose life he portrays less through action and narrative than through his fine, dramatic rendering of light and place.

• **John Clymer**, 74, produced more than 100 covers for the *Saturday Evening Post* before turning his attention exclusively to Western subjects. He is the most expensive cowboy artist, with his 1981 oil, "Long Cold Winter," which won a silver medal at the last CAA show, selling for the astounding nonauction price of $150,000. His historical scenes, which he still executes much in the narrative style of the old *Saturday Evening Post* illustrations, are often built around commonplace, telling incidents.

• **James Bama**, 55, now lives with his family on the southern fork of the Shoshone River in Wyoming's primeval "Big Horn" country; but until the age of 41 he worked in New York City as a commercial artist. Bama is a loner. He's not a member of the CAA or any other artists' group, and he's rare among the many cowboy artists who have come out of New York in maintaining his ties back East. He still sells all his work through the Coe Kerr Gallery in New York City, for prices ranging from $35,000 to $75,000. Bama's best paintings—though not his most popular— are his studies of contemporaries as contemporaries, rather than the *Hiawatha* maidens (his biggest seller in reproduction) or the locals who like to dress up weekends as mountain men. In his rodeo scenes, such as "The Rookie Bronc Rider," and his pictures of the young Indians at Wounded Knee, Bama achieves a purity of light and a smoothness of tone that transcend the limitations of his photo-realist style.

Cowboy art can trace its roots back at least as far as the early 19th century, when George Catlin, perhaps the greatest Western artist of all time, took his paints and brushes and ventured into the wilderness in the company of William Clark (of Lewis and Clark). His close observations of the beautifully savage country molded a new and powerful aesthetic, one that incorporated the sweep of the plains and the primitive dynamism of the people who lived there. His portraits of Indian chiefs are noble, and his paintings of scenes such as "Buffalo Hunting" are full of action and bravery, and for all the smallness of the canvas, they have tremendous scope. Catlin was, as well, deeply concerned with preserving in his art a record of the Indian race he greatly admired but feared to be doomed. As such, Catlin was as much ethnographer as artist.

Remington and Russell continued the tradition of painter as historian into the early 1900s, though by the time they got there the West they were chronicling was mostly a thing of the past. But as with Catlin, the innate drama of the land inspired a dramatic (some critics say melodramatic) response. Indians attack stagecoaches, or ambush cavalry, and so on. Their narrative art found an immediate public sympathy. Both Remington and Russell made their livings at first selling illustrations to the popular weeklies of the day: *Collier's*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Century*.

Cowboy art is unequivocably stating values, the American middle-class values of striving and prospering, optimism and individualism.

Such present stars of the CAA as Tom Lovell, Howard Terpning, Harvey Johnson, and Frank McCarthy also started out as professional illustrators, mostly in New York City, and even the real cowboys among them, Niblett and Snidow, worked long years as commercial artists. While it's something they're glad they no longer have to do, most of them look on their commercial work as a valuable apprenticeship in the demanding techniques of realism.

What are the chances of the cowboy artists breaching the ramparts of such a highbrow institution as the Whitney when they bring their exhibition East next year? It is, of course, the Whitney Museum of *American* Art, and certainly a strong case could be made that Western art is *the* truly indigenous American art: After all, it has a history almost as long as this country's. But if you trace the lineage of *modernist* American art—the kind the Whitney favors—you'll soon find yourself back in Paris among the Cubists. The museum has in the past held exhibitions that included Russells and Remingtons, but they represent history and are not likely to challenge accepted notions of what contemporary art is all about. It's not just that today's cowboy artists paint realism, and often in a narrative mode. This would present no problem to critics and curators if they could get the right theoretical fix on it. Various forms of realism have been in fashion on and off at least since the photo-realists, and "narrative" art is now all the rage. But cowboy art, one suspects, will always remain unacceptable.

The problem is that cowboy art is unequivocably stating values, precisely the sort of values that are going to discomfort refined aesthetes who are perfectly at home with the violence of Punk art. Gordon Snidow summed it up when he described the success of Western art as largely a middle-class phenomenon. Where he grew up in New Mexico, says Snidow, before World War II, people didn't necessarily think in terms of finishing high school. After the war, all these people could suddenly afford to go to college. They could start thinking about art for the first time, maybe even attend a few art appreciation courses. In the West, "middle class" isn't a derogatory term. It's almost synonymous with America. Just as these people are unabashedly patriotic, they want their art to reflect their values, the American middle-class values of striving and prospering, of optimism and individualism. They relate these values, perhaps romantically, to the frontier spirit, what Remington was describing when he said he wanted to paint people "with the bark still on them."

One of the guiding principles of modernism (it will probably hold true for "post-modernism" too) is that it is anti-bourgeois, from the Surrealists' call, "*Epater les bourgeois*," to the Abstract-Expressionist movement away from "bourgeois easel painting." Cowboy art, regardless of its artistic merits, could never be assimilated into this history. Perhaps it's just as well. There is more than one current in art history, and while modernism seems to be getting lost in the ever proliferating eddies along the way, Western art's current is running strong and picking up momentum. It does, after all, have the tremendous advantage that many people like it. ■

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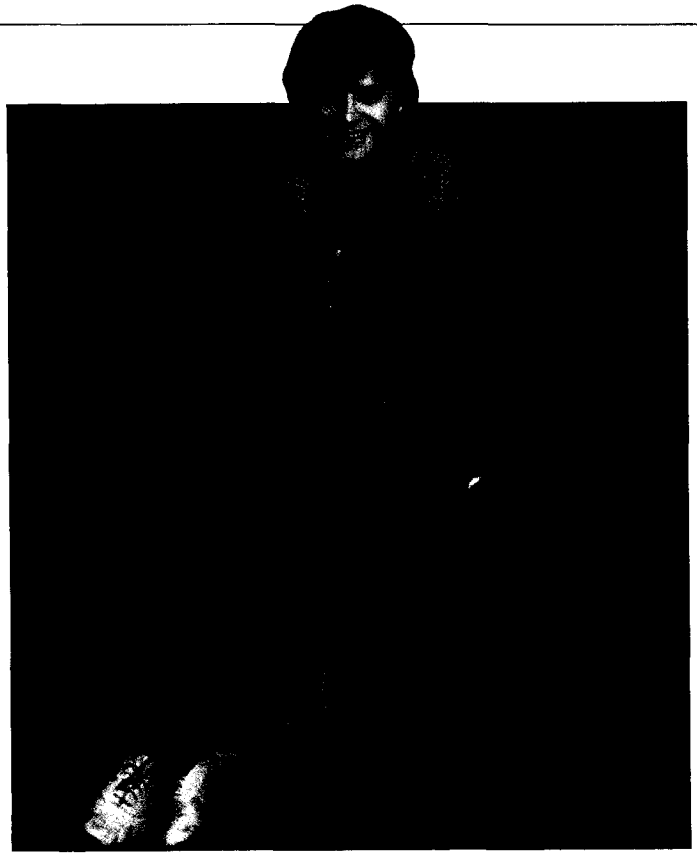
Why Baryshnikov Is Under Fire

As a dancer, he's still a superstar. But as the director of the American Ballet Theatre, he has alienated many soloists in the company and badly staged the great Russian classics.

BY WALTER TERRY

On stage, Mikhail Baryshnikov continues to step, spin, and soar with the smoothness that has marked him as one of the great dancers of this century. Behind the scenes, however, all is not so smooth, for there is a vast difference in the duties required of Baryshnikov the superstar and Baryshnikov the new and still inexperienced director (15 months) of the American Ballet Theatre.

There is criticism, both inside and outside ABT, that Baryshnikov, 34, has badly overhauled the great Russian classics, especially *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*. Moreover, the dancers themselves complain that he has dangerously thinned out the 'ranks' of the major soloists—those dancers who have graduated from the corps but are not yet "stars." And finally, many ABT dancers grumble that Baryshnikov is too remote, too inaccessible to be an effective director. "Ballet Theatre is my home and I love it," says Fernando Bujones, an ABT star. "But it is very different from what it used to be. Pushing aside the mature soloists makes for a very bad gap. And I don't agree at all with the changes Misha has made in the classics."



Baryshnikov: "We hardly even see him," complains one dancer.

MARTHA SWOPE

When Baryshnikov assumed the directorship of the 40-year-old ABT in the fall of 1980, his qualifications for the job were almost exclusively rooted in his personal prestige as a dancer. A young star of Leningrad's Kirov Ballet, he had defected to the West in 1974, performed with ABT for a time, switched his loyalties to George Balanchine's New York City Ballet for a year, and returned to ABT shortly before he was tapped by the board of trustees of the Ballet Theatre Foundation to succeed Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith, co-directors since 1945.

Although inexperienced as a director, Baryshnikov jumped into his new job with enthusiasm. In a matter of three or four months, he began to place his mark on the company (*SR*, February 1981). The corps de ballet, which had been underrehearsed in previous seasons, emerged as a finely polished unit. The national dances (for example, a czardas or a mazurka), important to such 19th-century classics as *Swan Lake* and *Raymonda*, were now done with a style and flourish that had eluded most American dancers in the past but in which Russians have long excelled. Baryshnikov also stressed the accent-on-youth approach by entrusting many leading roles, even on opening nights, to dancers still in their teens.

But with these positives have come negatives. Baryshnikov's changes have alienated many of his dancers, especially the senior soloists, those in their late 20s and early 30s, who are complaining that they are not being used enough and not given a chance to dance principal roles. Rebecca Wright, one of ABT's most highly praised soloists, quit the company last month in frustration. In their consistently rave reviews of her performances, critics had often complained that she was being underused by Baryshnikov. "I had no illusions or hopes for promotion," she

Walter Terry is the dance critic for *Saturday Review*.

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says. "The major soloists are treated like nonentities." Such feelings of frustration around ABT are pervasive, and the atmosphere is unhappy. Says another soloist: "Baryshnikov is not a kind man. He's cold, even cruel. Talking to him is like talking to a brick wall. So the motto here these days is 'Do you work, take your money, and run!'"

Baryshnikov responds to this criticism by stressing that younger dancers with potential must be developed. "That often means older dancers who have been through that process may feel they are being overlooked," he says. "They are not." But Cynthia Gregory, the company's American prima ballerina, while she applauds Baryshnikov's swift promotion of the junior dancers, misses the experienced presence of the in-between dancers. As one soloist points out: "Baryshnikov is making a big mistake by creating a gap between the young dancers and the ballerinas—sometimes it's a 15-year difference. Even if he wants to create a company from scratch, it takes time. You can't take a 16-year-old and put her, or him, in a character role."

Dancers and critics are equally unhappy with the way Baryshnikov is Sovietizing the great ballet classics. Assisted by Elena Tchernichova, Diana Joffe, and Jurgen Schneider (all Soviet trained) among his principal ballet masters, Baryshnikov has changed Michel Fokine's lyrical *Les Sylphides* (which Fokine himself set at ABT in its first season) into the hard-edged Soviet version known as *Chopiniana*, and he has also made a mishmash out of two great ABT staples, *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*.

These two 19th-century classics were originally staged for ABT years ago by David Blair of England's Royal Ballet based on the choreography of the legendary Russian, Marius Petipa. But Soviet choreographers have since altered the Petipa ballets, sometimes rechoreographing them entirely. These altered versions, performed by the Kirov, were danced by Baryshnikov before he defected and are now the basis of his ABT productions. It is doubtful that Baryshnikov knows that much of his resetting of Act III of *Swan Lake*, for example, is not Petipa at all, but rather the work of Vladimir Bourmeister, who created a new *Swan Lake* for Moscow's Stanislavsky Ballet Company in 1953. (Baryshnikov was only five years old at the time.) Baryshnikov, in notes distributed to a skeptical press, insisted that the choreography he was showing in his "Petipa" programs was "original." The Russian ballet historian, Natalia Roslaveva contradicts him. "Even the current version of the third act as presented by the Kirov Theater Ballet," she writes, "shows some influence of the Bourmeister *Swan Lake*."

Furthermore Baryshnikov has made Benno, the Prince's best friend in *Swan Lake*, characterless and has changed the Prince's Tutor from a comical yet sympathetic old man into a bearded blank. At the other extreme, he has changed the dress and makeup of Von Rothbart, the evil magician, so that he looks like an oldtime movie vamp in witch's drag.

In tampering with *Giselle*, which Petipa rechoreographed in 1884 from the Paris original (1841) of Coralli and Perrot, Baryshnikov has deleted all sense of character from the villagers of Act I, stripped down the role of Hilarion, Giselle's peasant sweetheart, and changed the dress of the ghostly maidens of Act II so that they look like ballet dancers on their way to class rather than fanciful creatures of woodland mists.

Gregory notes that the whole concept of *Giselle* has been changed: "The heart, the tenderness have been taken out of *Giselle*." She also confirms the presence of strong Kirov influences in the company classes taught by Baryshnikov's assistants. "The Soviet style is definitely there, especially in the molding of the arms and head. At first I fought it, but I'm getting used to it. I think it is very good for the corps—it gives them a unity of style—but there is a danger of turning them into robots."

Ironically, Baryshnikov was brought in to save ABT. It was on the brink of bankruptcy in 1977 when Herman Krawitz came to ABT as executive director, having earlier served as assistant general manager of the Metropolitan Opera. He raised money, as he has in the past for other projects, but then he insisted that if he were to continue, Chase and Smith must leave and Baryshnikov be made artistic director. A blunt man with a quick temper and sturdy ego, Krawitz wanted Baryshnikov as head of ABT because he knew the superstar would attract financial support. Further, he had already produced a successful television version of *The Nutcracker* with Baryshnikov and was to continue with *Baryshnikov on Broadway* and other financially rewarding enterprises.

During the first year of his regime, Baryshnikov made few outside commitments. He wisely took charge of the company and began to mold it in the image he desired. He worked hard and closely with the dancers, with the ballet masters, with all those associated with preparing the repertory. But these days he is simply not there as much—in part, he says, because of an injury. Complains one dancer: "We hardly even see him. He comes in on tour for two or three performances and then disappears." When he's away, authority

MARTHA SWOPE

Makarova and Baryshnikov in his badly restructured version of *Swan Lake*.

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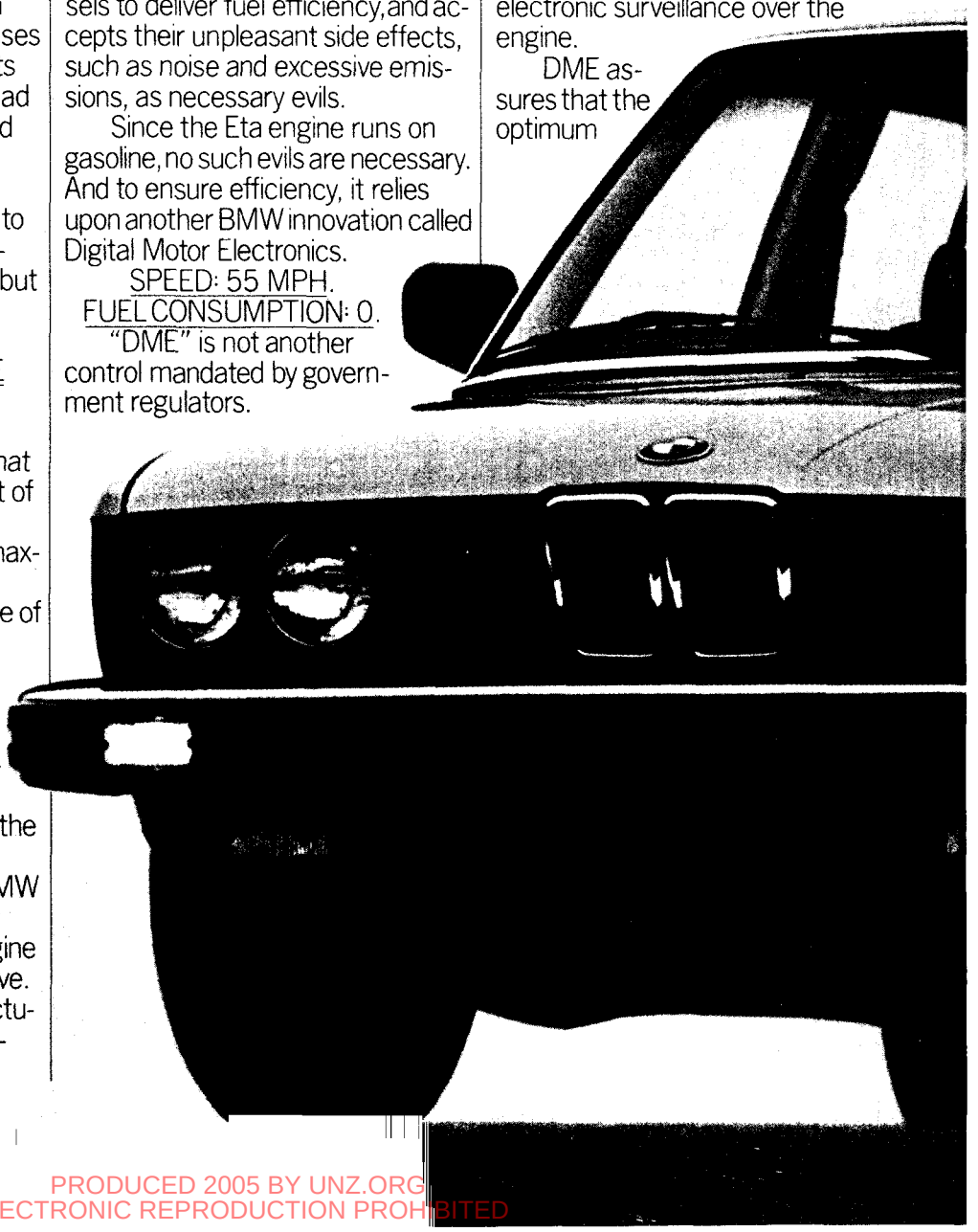

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is delegated to others, mainly his Soviet-trained associates. Some of the dancers report that there is dissension among the Russian-trained ballet mistresses. Says one: "They hate each other. Sometimes they don't speak. Always they contradict each other when they are setting ballets for us."

Baryshnikov's absence has also given greater authority to Charles France, who formerly did PR work for ABT and is now Baryshnikov's official assistant. A capable businessman, France is nonetheless disliked by many ABT dancers who view him as haughty and dictatorial. It is France, they say, who fusses unnecessarily about hairdos and toe shoes, and who wants to know who said what to whom. "He's a double spy," says one dancer, "our own built-in KGB."

Some dancers also claim that France wields too much power even when Baryshnikov is around. "Charles talks and talks and Misha listens and listens," reports one principal dancer. France disputes the notion that he is the power behind the throne. "Misha is a dancer, director, coach," says France. "He meets with ABT's board and he has his own projects. When people suggest that he take a look at a dancer's work or a choreographer's, he does. I'm his coordinator." France does concede, however, that there was tension between him and the dancers when Baryshnikov first took over. "At first," he says, "there was a misunderstanding about me because the transition was difficult all up and down the line." Such misunderstandings, he believes, have been cleared up.

ABT is now well into its second season under Baryshnikov, and he is concentrating less on the classics than on contemporary ballet and even modern dance. Here, his efforts have been more successful. Last season, Paul Taylor's lovely *Airs* joined the repertory, and this season Baryshnikov is adding new ballets by Choo San Goh, the currently "hot" but highly limited Singapore-born choreographer; England's Kenneth MacMillan; America's Merce Cunningham and Lynne Taylor-Corbett, both representing modern dance; and Twyla Tharp, who earlier created *Push Comes to Shove* for Baryshnikov. Roland Petit's *Carmen* and George Balanchine's too-long-absent *Bourrée Fantasque* join the ABT rep for the first time. Veteran Antony Tudor is back to rehearse his masterpiece *Pillar of Fire*, with Gregory slated for the role that made Nora Kaye a Ballet Theatre star 40 years ago.

In addition, the rather catch-as-catch-can Ballet Theatre School with pupils of all ages from everywhere has been replaced by a very small school of selected students chosen after careful auditions, the method used at the Kirov and other state-run theaters. Graduates from this new school might go into ABT itself or into ABT II, the junior group headed by Richard Englund. Oliver Smith and Englund are in charge of the choreographic workshop venture aimed at discovering new choreographers for ABT itself. The results of the first workshop were dismal since the Englund-Smith selections (six in all) from a pool of applicants were in no way suitable fare for a major dance company.

With such a mixed record, there is a real question whether Baryshnikov will stay on as ABT director. Sensitive to criticism, he says he no longer reads anything written about him and isn't talking publicly about his record at ABT or his future. He certainly has no shortage of lucrative opportunities on television, Broadway, or in the movies (he was nominated for an Oscar for *The Turning Point*). "I don't think he'll stay on for more than two years," one of his dancers predicts.

A crucial role in Baryshnikov's future may possibly be played, ironically, by the woman he replaced as director, Lucia Chase. When forced by Krawitz from her position, Chase said that she would neither resign nor retire but that she would simply "relinquish" her post. She has done just that. She retains her place on the board of trustees, she travels to most cities with the company, and she is still a force to be reckoned with. When asked what she was doing with respect to the company that she once headed and funded for so long, she said, "As long as there are full houses and good reviews, I shall smile and keep quiet. When the houses and the reviews are not so good, I'll stop smiling and speak up."

Lucia Chase's last onstage role was that of the Princess-Mother in *Swan Lake*, a part that saw her pamper her princely son when he was good and chide him firmly when he did not live up to his responsibilities as her heir to the principality. Baryshnikov recently added the part of the Prince in *Swan Lake* to his personal repertory. I asked Chase if her present offstage role with the Ballet Theatre was analogous to the role she once played onstage as the Princess-Mother. Her firm reply, "Exactly!" ■

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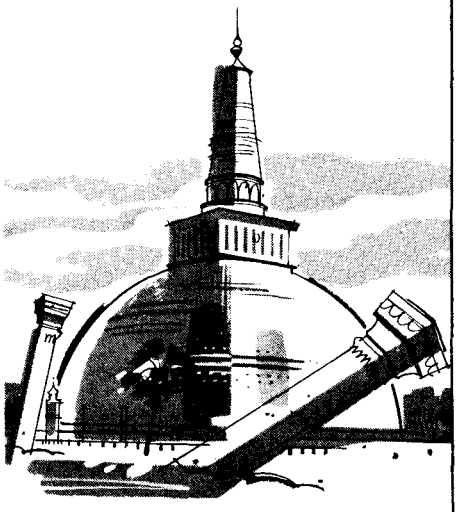

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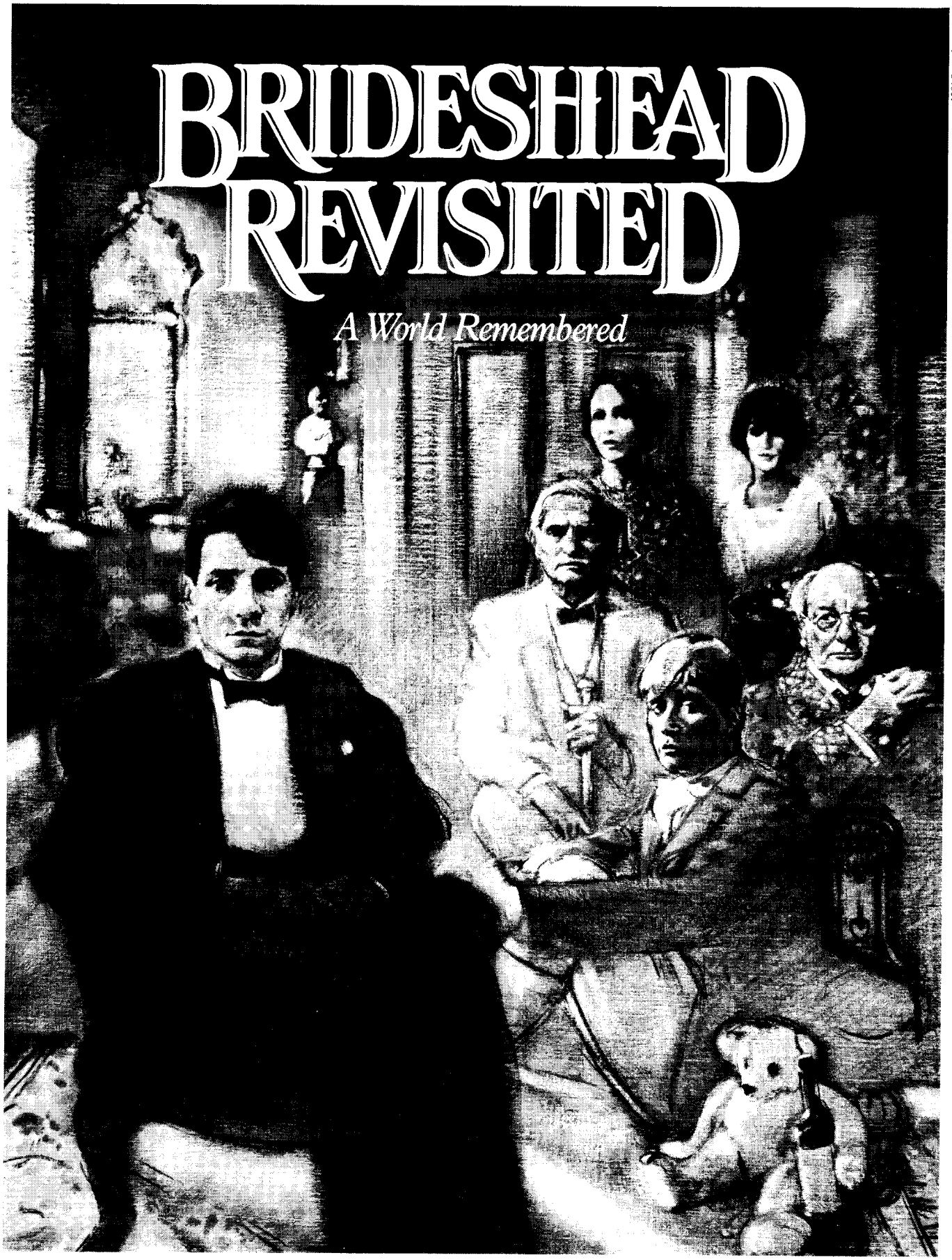

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Truffaut at Mid-Career

He has made some of the great films of our era. Now approaching 50, he is afraid to slow down. "I don't want to waste any time while I still have my health."

BY STEVE LAWSON

For a man who has made nearly one film a year in the last 25 years—beginning with such classics as The 400 Blows, Shoot the Piano Player, *and* Jules and Jim—*François Truffaut seems perennially youthful: His exuberant film style and favorite subjects (children, movies, unrequited love) make him appear especially energetic.*

Born in Paris in 1932, Truffaut owes much of his love of film to the legendary critic André Bazin, who befriended him during difficulties with the army and various jobs. Encouraged by Bazin, Truffaut became a leading adversary film critic in the 1950s, then turned with Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, and others to directing. The films of these new directors were termed the New Wave, and their vigorous, unsentimental style revolutionized movie-making everywhere.

*Since then, Truffaut has been in the forefront of his art: directing a series of autobiographical films with Jean-Pierre Léaud as the Truffaut-surrogate, Antoine Doinel; offbeat Hitchcock tributes (*The Bride Wore Black*); literary adaptations of Henry James* (The Green Room) *and Ray Bradbury* (Fahrenheit 451); *tributes to film and theater* (Day for Night, The Last Métro)*; and others. He has also appeared in his own films and authored two books:* Hitchcock *and* The Films of my Life.

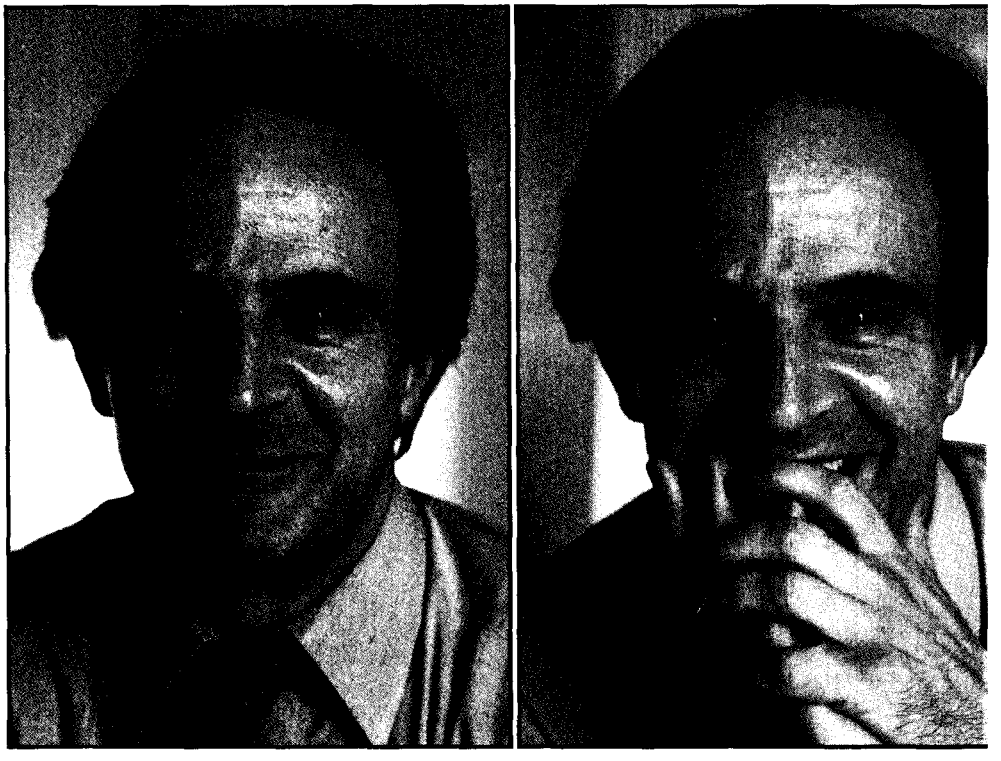
Divorced since the mid-1960s, he has two daughters—one a designer, one a student at Berkeley. He works in Paris out of offices at his production company, Les Films du Carrosse. When we met last October, he was about to attend the screening of his most recent feature film, The Woman Next Door, *at the New York Film Festival.*

SR *Watching* The Woman Next Door, *I kept thinking of* Jules and Jim....

TRUFFAUT A very different picture!

SR *Superficially, yes. But many details echo the earlier film: the music by Georges Delerue, the heroine's neurosis, her return to her lover at night, the suicide/murder at the end, and the final narration about the lovers' burial. Were you conscious of these links?*

TRUFFAUT Everything you say is true. But, remember—I made *Jules and Jim* 20 years ago, when I wasn't even 30 yet. And the idea there was much more literary: *Jules and Jim* was the first novel of a 75-year-old man, and 50 years had passed between the actual events and his recounting of them. It amused me to make the film of an old man, as it were. Like when you open an old shoebox and read love letters 18, 20 years old—you're amazed at the violence of the prose. In *The Woman Next Door*, on the other



Steve Lawson wrote the script for *Edith Wharton: Looking Back*, which was shown recently on PBS; and his adaptation of *The Elephant Man* will run on ABC this month.

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hand, I told a present-day story, set at the moment when the lovers deal each other their cruelest blows.

SR *It's a very physical film.*

TRUFFAUT Yes. In *Jules and Jim* I kept the feelings and the physical apart. Ten years later, in *Two English Girls*, I tried to synthesize them, to show people so in love that they had physical reactions—they fainted, vomited, had fever or chills. *The Story of Adele H.* is another period film made in this vein. With *The Woman Next Door,* I wanted to try the theme in a modern context.

SR *There are some interesting shots in your new film. When the lovers meet for their tryst at a hotel, they go out of the frame and your camera stays on a maid wheeling laundry off down the hall.*

TRUFFAUT I had to do that. I wanted to skip past the whole first part of the action in the bedroom—the lovers undressing and rolling around. I wanted to start the scene after the sexual act. So, to elide time, I focused your attention on the laundry cart wheeling away. More interesting, say, than showing the outside of the hotel, right?

SR *The two husbands in the film have distinctive jobs—one is an engineer who trains people in model boats, the other is an air traffic controller. Were you aiming for some suggestion of escape here?*

TRUFFAUT I admit these choices were a little facile. But I can never resign myself to showing someone working in an office. The job always has to be visual.

SR *The most powerful image in the film is that of the heroine cutting up old photographs and throwing them into the fire. Did you have a literary source in mind—*The Aspern Papers, *say, or* Hedda Gabler*?*

TRUFFAUT Actually, some reporter at my press conference suggested *Mommie Dearest*.... Seriously, though, this was my collaborator Suzanne Schiffman's idea. And I seem to need fire in my films—remember *Jules and Jim*, when Jeanne Moreau burns old letters which she calls "lies"?

SR *Aren't you worried that the coincidence of Mathilde, the heroine, moving in next door to Bernard, her former lover, seems melodramatic?*

TRUFFAUT No, no! It's the premise of the film! You could reproach me if I'd inserted it in the middle, but not for doing so at the beginning.

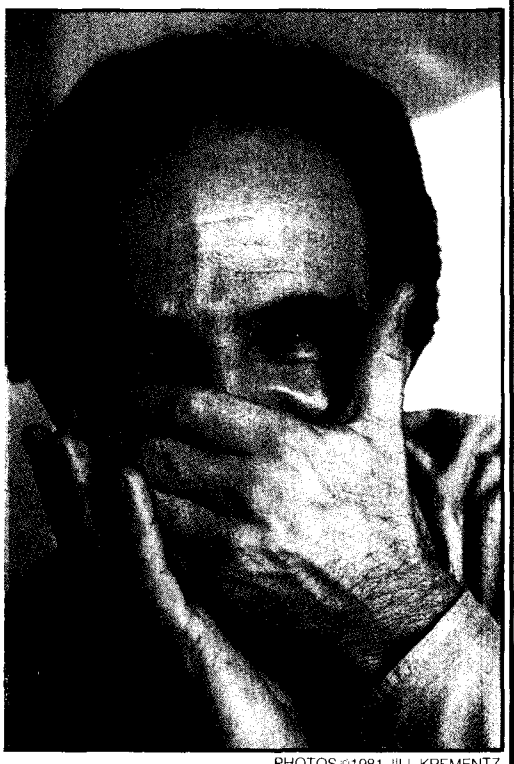
SR *You think audiences will accept this?*

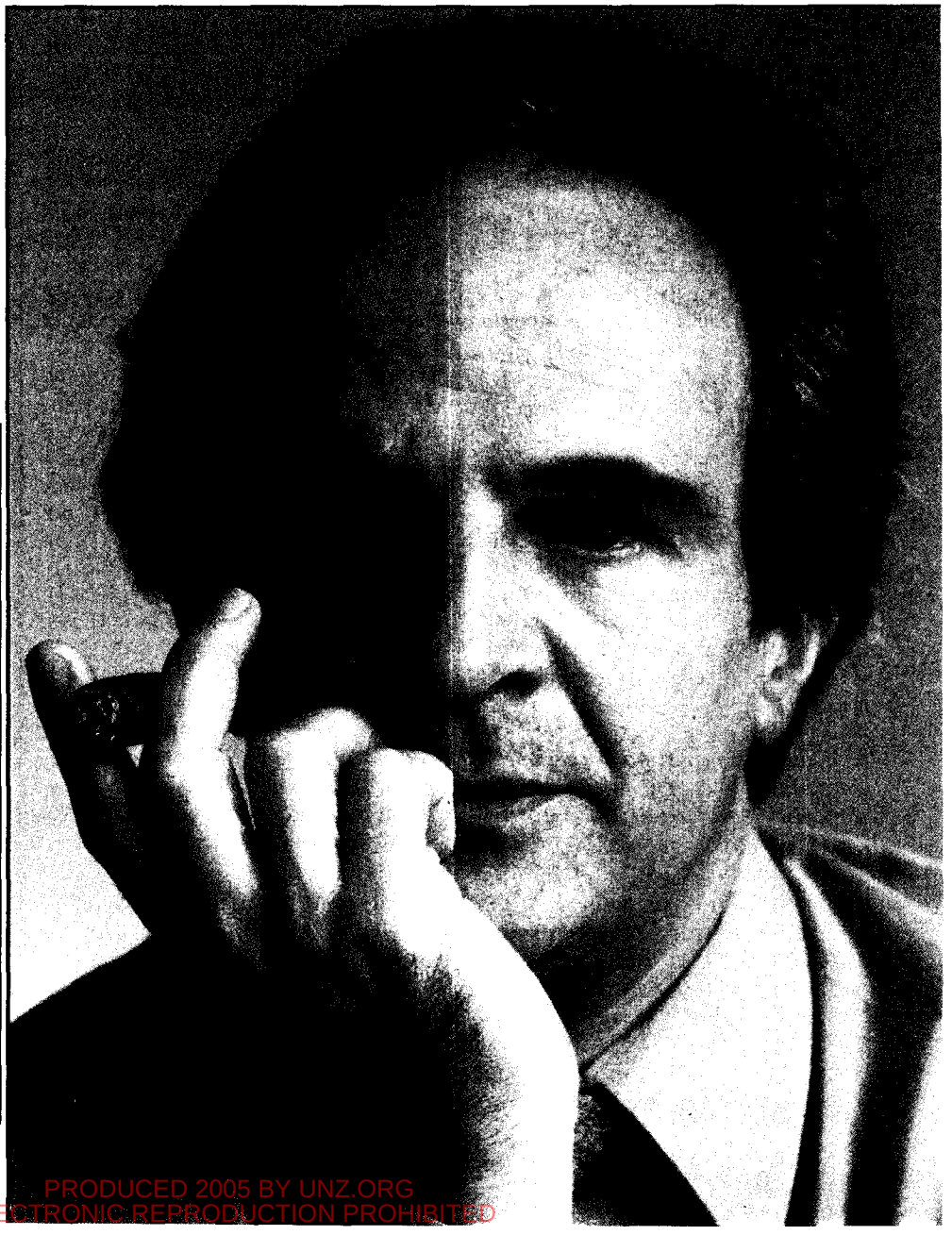
TRUFFAUT They may dislike the film, but it won't be for this.

SR *You've made six or seven period films. Are these harder to shoot than those in contemporary settings?*

TRUFFAUT Only because you have to keep an eye on historical details. It's more difficult, for example, to film a coach and horses moving away than a car starting up. But there's one great advantage: In a period film, audiences accept more extreme behavior as the norm.

SR *Half of your films have been based on books. Could you have been a writer*





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Off-screen, on-screen: Truffaut (left) with Fanny Ardant, star of *The Woman Next Door*—a film about the physical effects of a love affair on the lovers; and (right) acting as a film director coaching Jacqueline Bisset in his movie *Day for Night*—a film he would like to rework.

rather than a filmmaker?

TRUFFAUT Writing was my first inspiration when I was 11. In the middle of World War II, I read Zola's *Thérèse Raquin,* and immediately I wanted to be a novelist. What switched me to films was the flood of American pictures into Paris after the Liberation.

SR *You often use an inherently literary device: a narrator. Why?*

TRUFFAUT I like the intimacy it provides. You're alone in a film audience—on your own in the dark—and a narrator is someone you can trust. Just as I prefer a novel written in the first person to a third-person point of view.

SR *It's equally hard to imagine a Truffaut film without music.*

TRUFFAUT Unhappily, yes. I really admire directors who don't rely on music. Bergman, Buñuel, Rohmer, Bresson—practically no music. Somehow I need it—to flow with the images, to mark the passages of time. Music changes tenses for me.

SR *It also delineates your characters. Catherine, in* Jules and Jim, *is probably the most powerful figure you've created. Would you agree?*

TRUFFAUT Yes, but she was unreal. Such women are marvelous to some people, but they seem odious if you're not in love with them. Look at the character played by Catherine Deneuve in *The Last Métro*—very close to life, whereas Jeanne Moreau's Catherine was the ideal woman seen by a child. A sort of fairy tale.

SR *Do you have a preference for any of your films?*

TRUFFAUT No.

SR *Could you reshoot* Jules and Jim *or* Shoot the Piano Player *today, 20 years later? Would they be as influential?*

TRUFFAUT They would seem totally different. In the early 1960s they looked daring; *Jules and Jim* was banned on TV in America for years. I remember we had to go see the bishop of New York for some permit or other. Fellini had just charmed the Church with his defense of *La Dolce Vita*, but we were less lucky. The clergy all stared severely at me and asked: "Do you realize that your heroine acts exactly like Liz Taylor on the set of *Cleopatra*?" I replied that I didn't know what Miss Taylor was doing, and they said: "It's in all the magazines." I shot back: "Well, we must read different ones!" The meeting was a total disaster.

SR *How about your other films? Would you remake any of them?*

TRUFFAUT Yes, those in which I didn't say everything I wanted to. I'd love to rework *Day for Night*. I'd like to try two or three more pictures on the Occupation era. And, every few films, I need to get back to the world of children.

SR *You grew up at the movies, more or less. Did you ever steal film stills, like the kids in* The 400 Blows *and* Day for Night*?*

TRUFFAUT Yes.

SR *From your youth, you've been casually associated with the left in France—desertion from the army, film criticism blasting well-made Establishment pictures, manifestos on Algeria, the boycott of the Cannes Festival. But politics rarely intrudes on your films. Wasn't* The Last Métro *a radical departure in this sense?*

TRUFFAUT I couldn't avoid politics there. Here was a precise moment in France's history, I had my vivid memories of the Occupation.... But, you know, that film is as much about show-business types as about politics. I'm pleading in their behalf, and at the same time examining the more reprehensible types—the breed who were anti-Semitic before the war and even more so during it.

SR *Is anti-Semitism one reason why you won't film Céline?*

TRUFFAUT Yes.

SR *Daxiat, the racist, homophobic critic in* The Last Métro, *is a break with all your other people in that he's demonstrably evil....*

TRUFFAUT But I give him a little *noblesse* at one point. He confides to Deneuve: "I adore the theater, I live for the theater—but theater people detest me."

SR *He seems almost schizophrenic, though. He gives Deneuve's opening night a standing ovation, but pans the play in his column the next day.*

TRUFFAUT Critics in Europe often do this. You never can tell!

SR *It's hard to imagine—considering your charm—that you were a real object of vituperation when you were a critic.*

TRUFFAUT I'm charming because

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we're talking about my films!

SR *Does it worry you when people misinterpret them?*

TRUFFAUT No. Because next year, I'll make another one. I was genuinely baffled once, though, when I released *The Green Room*. I'd thought it was a very simple picture, and audiences complained it was complicated.

SR *Did you intend it as an* hommage *to Henry James?*

TRUFFAUT I based it on "The Altar of the Dead," of course, but I meant more than that. I wanted to explore the obsession one can have with death. The hero of *The Green Room* loves the dead so much that he's blind to the living. I'm critical of him, but I love him, too.

SR *Many critics claimed this showed a new solemnity on your part.*

TRUFFAUT It's funny, because I thought I'd put a lot of black humor into it. Everyone in the film admires the writer, because he can reel off 10 obituaries in a week and never repeat himself.

SR *So you don't see yourself as growing more pessimistic....*

TRUFFAUT Not at all!

SR *...and turning 50 next month isn't a great watershed?*

TRUFFAUT It's merely another year.

SR *You are generally thought of as a director of light, exhilarating works, yet of your 20 films, 13 include at least one death.*

TRUFFAUT That many? Well, when I started directing, I was unable to include deaths in my original screenplays. I could only put them in when I was adapting a book that required them. Then *Stolen Kisses* came along, and I managed to kill off one of my characters. That liberated me, and ever since I've cheerfully put in deaths and suicides to my heart's content.

SR *If you subscribe to this belief—that life contains more than its share of grim reality—why do you hate documentaries?*

TRUFFAUT Because they claim to show the truth. But you can't. Every shot you choose is an interpretation.

SR *Could you have been a theater director?*

TRUFFAUT I doubt it. I always see images of different sizes! I'd very much like to *write* a play, but what scares me is the intermission. I'm afraid that, when it's over, the audience would be a lot smaller!

SR *Are there any actors you'd like to work with?*

TRUFFAUT Mia Farrow—she has a wonderful lost air.

SR *You've acted several times in your own films—the widower in* The Green Room, *the doctor in* The Wild Child, *the director in* Day for Night. *Is it problematic to act and direct simultaneously?*

TRUFFAUT Not at all. You have more of a sense of harmony with your actors. screen. The writer doesn't get enough credit, either. Nor the crew.

SR *I remember you once disliked Michelangelo Antonioni.*

TRUFFAUT Because he had no sense of humor. But he's a director with a great deal of purity and integrity.

SR *Back in 1961, you told an interviewer that older directors played cards and drank whiskey, while the younger ones were pinball addicts. How about in 1981?*

TRUFFAUT I'm not sure....

SR *Cocaine, maybe?*

TRUFFAUT Not in France. But, you know, when we completed *Close Encounters*, Steven Spielberg said to me: "I don't know if you're aware of it, but out of this crew of 250, you and I are the only ones who haven't taken any drugs." Funny—I'd thought all the assistants were very efficient. But I couldn't figure out why they changed them every four days!

SR *You've made a film almost every year since 1958. Are you afraid to relax?*

TRUFFAUT Absolutely. When I was writing criticism, I saw many directors vanish or go idle for three or four years after a hit. When they grew old, they were bitter over all the time they'd wasted. And you have to be much healthier to direct a film than to write a book. So I don't want to waste any time while I have my health.

SR *How do you feel about the future of film? Are you optimistic?*

TRUFFAUT No. They have machines now on which you can skip past all the scenes that might be boring. That frightens me. I'm worried that we're entering a subliterate age, in which nobody will ever read *War and Peace* unless he's in a sanatorium. All these cassettes, videodiscs...the complete works of any artist in 153 minutes. Like those volumes I see in American bookstores—*Portable Tolstoy*! I'm afraid this will happen to filmmakers, too. ■

"Today, all directors are overrated. In the past, the emphasis was on the actor. Then it went too far in reverse."

SR *Why did you agree to play the scientist Lacombe in Steven Spielberg's* Close Encounters of the Third Kind*?*

TRUFFAUT I liked the project, and it came at just the right time. It seemed to take forever, though, and I'll never do it again. But my contact with Spielberg was excellent.

SR *Are there other American directors you admire?*

TRUFFAUT I like particular films—*Dog Day Afternoon, All the President's Men*—rather than careers.

SR *American movies were essential to all you young critics and directors in the French New Wave. Why are they less vital now?*

TRUFFAUT They were much more romantic then. Today, you'd never see a picture like *The Best Years of Our Lives*. American cinema has gotten very strong financially. But it relies far more on physical shocks than it used to.

SR *Which directors are overrated today?*

TRUFFAUT All of them. In the past, the emphasis was on the actor. Then it went too far in reverse. We've lost sight of the fact that it's the actor up there on that

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PHILLIPS 66

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Thomas H. Middleton

High Winds and Nice Days

It has been said that here in Los Angeles, we don't have weather: We have catastrophes. After the long, sun-dried summer has taken the juices out of our vegetation, and the brush has become brittle and hypersensitive, a harsh word can cause a potentially disastrous fire. The fire denudes the hillsides; in time, the winter rains come and sweep the raw, bald hills, carrying kilotons of mud and sometimes a house or two down to the floors of our many canyons. Throw an occasional earthquake and an almost constant "smog alert" into the mix, and the picture of catastrophe is fleshed out.

This past October, we were having one of our annual fires. The TV news showed the flames consuming several homes, wreaking tragedy on the occupants. A Santa Ana wind was doing its mischief. The Santa Ana is accounted an ill wind, but it blows some good: It scatters the smog. Its devilry, however, is undeniable. It is a hot wind that comes in across the mountains from the desert. It frazzles the nerves, and it whips whatever flames it finds into angry infernos. The newscaster on CBS that October day told us—he was no doubt reading from a Teleprompter—that the winds were "somewhere between the 35 to 50 mile-per-hour range."

The question that arose—in my mind at any rate—was "between the 35 to 50 mile-per-hour range and what?" *Between* is based on a binary. It is clearly related to *two*, *twin*, *twice*, and *twain*. The newscaster could have said, "The winds were somewhere in the 35 to 50 mile-per-hour range," but if he really wanted to use *between*, he should have said, "The wind velocity was somewhere between 35 and 50 miles per hour" or something similar.

The binary nature of *between*—its essential two-ness—is the basis for the rule that leads to "just *between* you and me" and "*among* the three of us." It's *between* two and *among* three or more. In any case, it should always be between something *and* something else, not between something *to* something else.

A couple of years ago, I wrote about *Have a nice day*. Several friends of mine had expressed what struck me as an unreasonable loathing for the expression. *Have a nice day* seems to be fading out. It has not disappeared completely, but it is no longer ubiquitous. I think it an agreeable enough pleasantry—merely another way of saying "Good day." "Good day" is an expression that went out of fashion before my time, although "Good morning," "Good afternoon," "Good evening," and "Good night" are still current. *Webster's New International II* says of "Good day": "Short for *God give you a good day* or *May you have a good day*, or the like: —used as a greeting or farewell."

Probably the last few thousand times that "Good day" was used it was a terse expression of dismissal: "Good day to you, sir!" That's the way I usually think of "Good day"—as an old-fashioned, rather melodramatic way of putting an end to an unpleasant encounter. *Have a nice day* was, to my mind, simply another way of expressing the "May you have a good day" cited in *Webster*.

"Have a nice day" is being replaced by "Have a nice one" —flip, cool, and cryptic.

One lady told me that she objected to *Have a nice day* because it was wishy-washy. She thought "Have a *productive* day" would be better. I disagree. "Have a productive day" is an exhortation to action. If, having been told to have a productive day, I go out and have a couple of relaxing beers with my pastrami, then let myself get talked into an afternoon of card-playing, I'll feel that I have wasted the day, whereas if I've been told to have a *nice* day. I'll feel quite all right, as though God had given me a nice day. I don't need an extra load of guilt for my lack of productivity.

As I said, *Have a nice day* seems to be dying out, at least around here. What we hear increasingly often is "Have a good one," spoken usually by young men. "Have a good one" is flip, cool, and cryptic. "Have a nice day," wishy-washy or not, was specific by comparison. I don't actually miss *Have a nice day*, but it wasn't bad while it lasted.

Back in the August 1981 *SR*, I started with the line, "I think it is a safe bet that I am the only person left on earth who can still recite all of Robert W. Service's *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*." I now confess that even as I wrote that, I thought I was probably wrong. I thought three or four other Service fans might still remember. But I figured what the hell. What the hell, indeed! Judging from my mail, there are hundreds—no, more likely thousands—of reciters not only of *Dan McGrew*, but of *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, and several take-offs of them ranging from the jocularly innocent to the thoroughly raunchy. I hereby apologize to the many dozens of people who responded and whose letters I simply will not be able to answer. (I still hear from people who say, "Perhaps you or one of your staff...." There ain't no staff, folks. Not even a secretary. Just yours truly.)

It wouldn't surprise me if an enterprising entrepreneur were to organize a Robert W. Service festival that included a recitation contest. He'd probably make a bundle. I wouldn't compete. So many of the people who wrote me say that they are frequently asked to recite. I have to corner people and trap them into listening, and I do that only when there is both a full moon and a Santa Ana wind and I've had the juice of close to a fifth of bourbon. I'm sure I'm not in the same league with these guys who get requests. I'd attend the Service festival though. It sounds like a guaranteed nice day. ■

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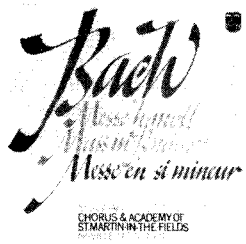

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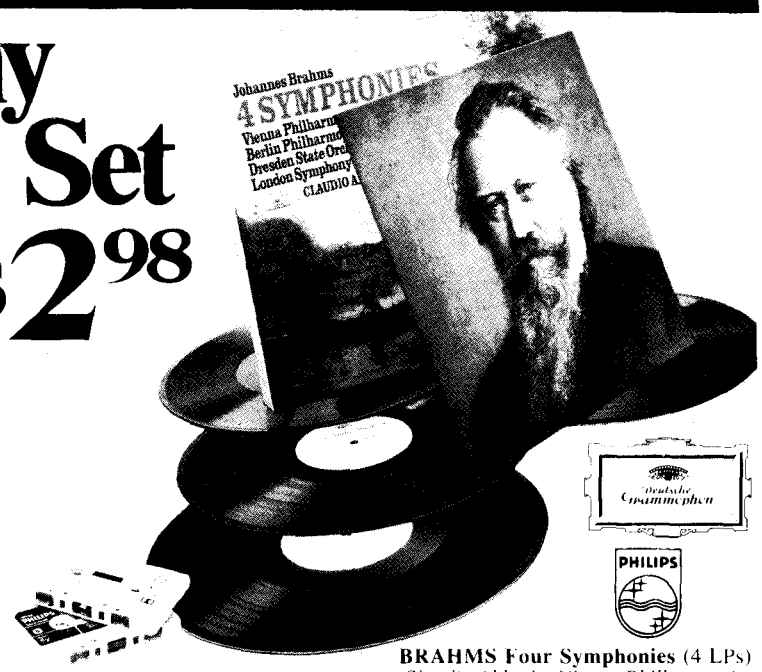

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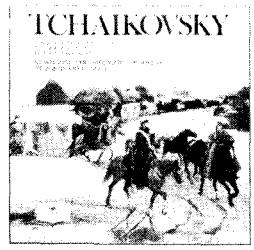

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Irving Kolodin

Pavarotti Outdone

Luciano Pavarotti made his first effort as Radames in Giuseppe Verdi's **Aïda** recently at the San Francisco Opera—and in the win-place-show operatic sweepstakes, Pavarotti merely showed. It's not that he was outsung by others in the cast—improbable for a man acclaimed by many as the greatest tenor of his generation. More accurately, he was overwhelmed by a dramatic spectacle to which he contributed little. And he was singing the wrong part at the wrong time.

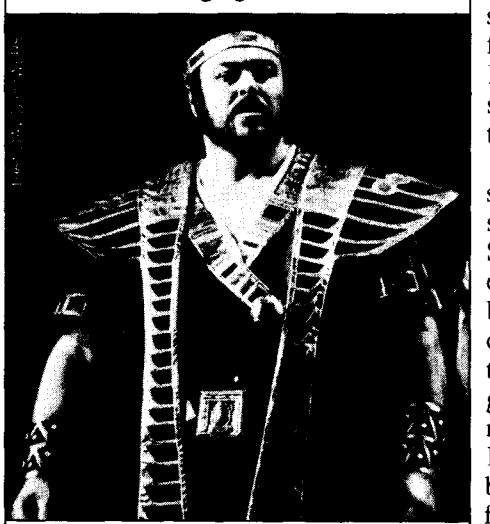
The San Francisco Opera's superb new production, designed by Douglas Schmidt, marked the last of 101 new productions overseen by Kurt Herbert Adler in his record-breaking reign—29 seasons—as the company's director. Overall, the production was good enough to stand beside the Metropolitan Opera's legendary 1908 production that marked the North American debuts of conductor Arturo Toscanini and Met manager Giulio Gatti-Casazza. (The latter's 27-year command at the Met was unmatched in the U.S. until Adler's tenure in San Francisco.)

In the 1908 production, Gatti-Casazza's Radames was Enrico Caruso—whom Pavarotti is known to regard as his idol. Among operatic tenors (Italy's fondest basic industry), there are many men who grow to maturity with fine voices and others who possess outgoing personalities. But those who have *both* in superlative supply are sufficiently rare to make Caruso of Naples and Pavarotti of Modena partners *in primus*. Here was the kind of conjunction of stars of which song and story, literature and legend, not to mention truth and falsehood, are made.

In his first appearance as Radames, Pavarotti was at his best in the opening "Celeste Aïda" (which had been omitted by so fine a tenor of the 1890s as Jean de Reszke, because it requires total vocal control two minutes after the curtain goes up on Act I) and in the concluding Tomb Scene.

Pavarotti performed "Celeste Aïda" with flair and flourish—and also with the conventional loud blast on the final top B-flat, rather than with the more esoterically artistic, soft, *dreamy* ending that the composer specified. The Tomb Scene, which brings together, after many vicissitudes, Radames and his beloved "slave" girl, Aïda, was described by Verdi as "not the usual agonies but ethereal." Thanks to the fine voice and resourceful artistry of the Welsh soprano Margaret Price as Aïda, beautifully blended with Pavarotti's soaring lyricism, the scene *was* ethereal.

But in between, during the three and a half hours of singing in which Radames



Luciano Pavarotti as Radames in *Aïda*.

lives or dies, Pavarotti was shadowboxing not only against Caruso, but against such fine interpreters of the role as Giovanni Martinelli and the pictorially perfect Mario del Monaco. His sound was muted, lacking the gut power to be dominant in the temple when he receives the ceremonial sword of high rank, in the stage-filled (222 performers!) triumphant spectacle, or in the superbly staged Nile panorama,

Pavarotti's paradoxical dilemma is a voice of such transcendent but reedy beauty that he has little option to color it otherwise. Against the brass and drums of Verdi's scoring, it was too often like an oboe contesting trumpets. As is still evident in recordings, Caruso's mature sound was not reedy. Nor were his aspirations greedy.

As an instance, just before he died in 1921 at the age of 48, Caruso yearned for music other than his unendingly demanded "Vesti la giubba" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*. So he created a dramatic and vocal sensation as the bearded, aged Hebrew in Halévy's *La Juive*. A work so lacking in popular appeal that it had not been done at the old Met since 1889, its lure for Caruso was profoundly artistic, not financial.

But Pavarotti, also in his mid-40s, also seeking a similarly significant direction for his career, has chosen less wisely. His Radames is destined to be remembered in sum as a highly profitable waste of artistic time.

Pavarotti aside, the production was superb. In addition to the theatrically suitable, colorful designs of Douglas Schmidt, which excelled any *Aïda* of my experience, the cast was carefully chosen by Adler to bring together not only the compelling Price as a top Aïda, but also the Polish mezzo Stefania Toczyska as a good-looking, intensely vengeful Amneris; a pair of stalwart bassos in Kevin Langan (King) and Kurt Rydel (Ramfis); bass-baritone Simon Estes (page 22) as a fiercely proud embodiment of Aïda's regal father, Amonasro; and a superior priestess in Susan Quittmeyer.

Much could also be said in praise of the discriminating conducting by a young Spanish newcomer to operatic America, Garciá Navarro. He will doubtless impart more drive to such rousing importunities as "Guerra!" (Battle!) in Act I, when he is not fencing with the uncertainties of such a debut.

What Adler has achieved in collaboration with designer Schmidt, costumer Lawrence Casey, and lighting director Thomas Munn, is as befits Verdi, a *canto del cigno* (Italian for "swan song") that San Franciscans can proudly enjoy and others envy for years to come. ■

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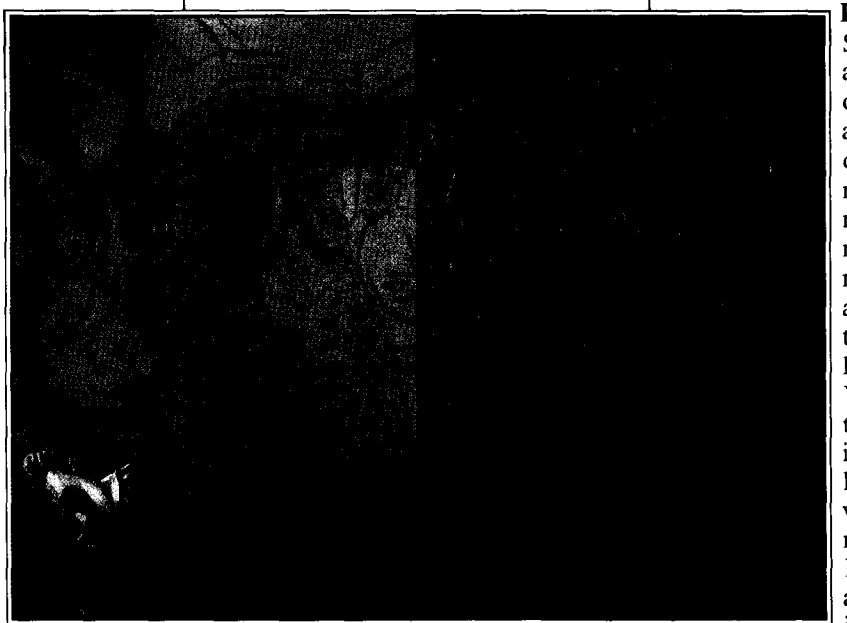
Carter Ratcliff

An Attack on Painting

What is made of paint and canvas, stretched on stretcher bars, and filled with images? A painting, right? Maybe, but then again, maybe not. If the art world's current state of stylistic disarray has taught us anything, it is that works on canvas may well be paintings in name only. In spirit, they are very likely something else, though no one knows precisely what. Call them pictures, and consider the possibility that those who deploy colors on flat, rectangular surfaces ought to be split into two groups—painters and picture-makers.

When painters get down to work, they are guided by a definition of their medium that a determined historian could trace back to the earliest stirrings of the Renaissance. Cezanne and Giotto have more in common than partisans of the new—or of the old—would like to believe. For all their differences, the painters share one characteristic, a wholehearted acceptance of those pictorial devices that have served for five centuries as the mechanisms, the working parts, of Western painting. An expressionist painting may stress surface texture at the expense of those conventions that build the orderly space of a canvas by Raphael or Mondrian. And Raphael may choose to suppress his touch to the point where his images are enamel-smooth. But in each instance, it's only a question of emphasis within a range of possibilities that have been with us so long that some critics feel they are eternal, hence unquestionable.

But they're not. What distinguishes a contemporary picture-maker, as opposed to a painter, is his skepticism about painting's "eternal" nature. Though he usually works with paint on canvas, he constantly questions his allegiance to the medium. In the process he casts doubt on the very act of wielding a brush. The artists I'm calling picture-makers turn the medium against itself. On one hand, this can be a hopelessly academic exercise in low-energy resentment. On the other, it can turn into a high-flash, ultra-chic gesture of disenchantment. Lots of young artists find it easy these days to mock the art history that is dished up in such unnourishing portions by teachers in darkened lecture halls.



COURTESY MARY BOONE GALLERY

Anti-painting: David Salle's "The Far Off Remembering of the Intuition" (1981).

These anti-painters—these picture-makers—include in their ranks some serious practitioners. Among them is Robert Longo, who conceives of an image much as a movie director establishes a take. Working in two and in three dimensions, Longo often supervises others in the actual production of a work. (See *SR*, February 1981). Thomas Lawson's canvases mix and match—rather, mismatch—current fashions with a grim, sardonic hand. The results open his works to disquieting, even horrifying images of a kind many art lovers trust painting to keep out of sight. Julien Schnabel, whose expressionist extravaganzas made a major splash last season and are currently making another, sometimes reaches so far beyond paint and canvas that he produces an anti-painting—an immense, bizarre object in which brushed-on images must compete with such materials as black velvet and cowhide, not to mention such ready-made forms as racks of antlers.

The most dissonant of them all is **David Salle** (pronounced Sally), whose doubts about his medium are so deep they read as doubts about the current state of the culture. Salle rejects those visual harmonies that lurk beneath modernist fragmentation just as surely as they blaze forth from the canvases of masters like Claude or Poussin. Yet Salle begins a picture with as unified an image as modernism has been able to provide—the uninflected monochrome field. Monochrome still serves as an emblem of pictorial purity, at least for some viewers, so his next move is to contaminate his colors with a deliberate gaffe. These include mock-expressionist calligraphy; nude figures in a manner that seems to have lurched into Salle's art from the pages of a how-to sex manual; line sketches overlaid in hues that clash stridently with the color of the field.

All of these devices appear at once, and there are others as well. Salle assembles his works from two or three canvas panels, so there's plenty of room. This season, one of the panels is likely to be filled with rows of large, carefully tinted discs—another quotation from Minimalism to lay over the first one, the flat

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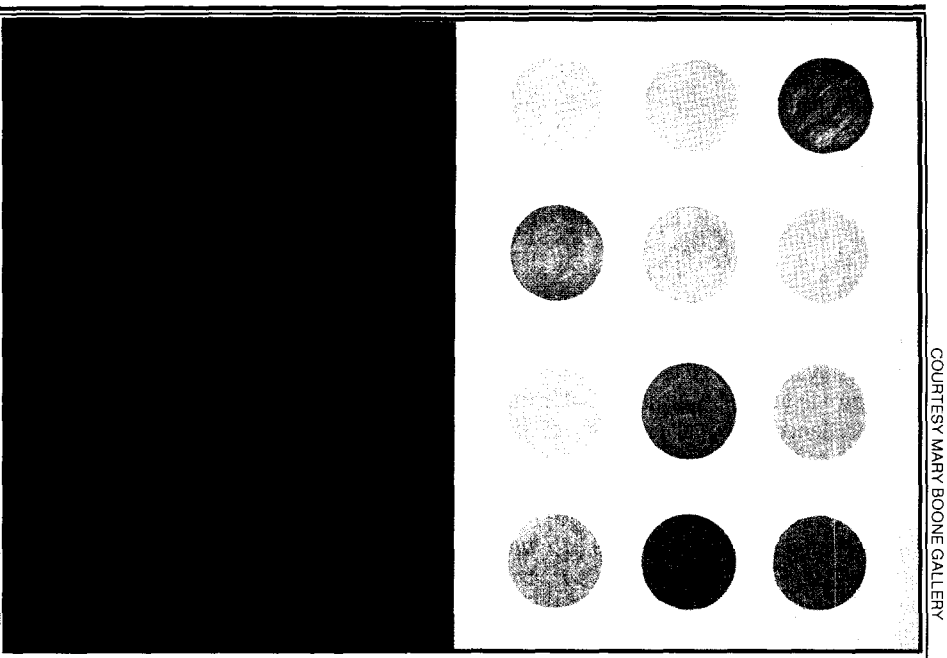
monochrome. And some of these one-color fields have gotten misty, as if to recall those pretentious atmospheres that drifted not so long ago through the canvases of the color-field painters. But why is this reminiscence of high-minded abstraction made to serve as backdrops for Salle's nudes, which are as heavily rendered as chunks of statuary? What is the meaning of these spilled coffee cups, these tipped hats, these pensive female faces—all the fragments of illustration that glide over the surface of his art? As Salle's bits and pieces gather, their possible significance multiplies, yet nothing adds up, at least not in terms made familiar by Western painting's traditions.

The most violent canvas by van Gogh or de Kooning is held together by a consistent emotional tone. Once you perceive that tone, you begin to see formal coherence as well. Salle cultivates dissonance. Each of his colors seems to be drawn from a different emotional register. Every one of his formal devices, from the monochrome fields to his jittery line drawings, arrives from a different stylistic repertoire. It would be disquieting enough if these shards of form and content had been jumbled randomly together. But they've been chosen with exquisite care to clash aggressively. The elements of a picture by Salle get on each other's nerves—and the viewer's, too. His images breathe an air of quarrelsomeness. As a result, some of Salle's multi-paneled pictures evoke the spirit of pluralism as it burns out and disappears into the fog of its own confusions, groping all the while for the self-destruct button. Yet his best works find an odd, persuasive peace, as if an image of cultural break-up had turned into a meditation on the loss of painting and those reassuring harmonies it used to provide even in desperate times.

Advanced art may have spent the last century alienating much of its audience, yet it is vitally important to remember that painting and sculpture lost friends and influence in quest of fresh unities, not of disintegration. Mondrian struggled to arrive at a "dynamic equilibrium" guided by his ideal of Utopian harmony. For all their frenzy, Pollock's "allover" canvases are held together by the artist's hand, his feelings and—in the largest sense of the word—his style. Of course, Picasso's reinvention of Cézanne flirts now and then with disunity. The Dadaists courted chaos with a bitter enthusiasm that sometimes sank into childish nastiness. The Pop artists—Warhol and Lichtenstein, in particular—found ways to bring the high seriousness of "allover" painting into contact with low-art images, pictures right out of the funny papers and movie magazines.



COURTESY MARY BOONE GALLERY

Salle's "Untitled" (1981): Images chosen with exquisite care to clash aggressively.

Thus Salle and his colleagues in picture-making have forebears. Yet painting has persisted. Painters, radicals and conservatives alike, still try to give their works as much integrity, as images, as they possess physically—these four-cornered, neatly framed objects. In the 1890s, Gauguin said that "in painting, a unity is obtained that is not possible in music, where the harmonies follow one another.... Hearing can only grasp a single sound at one time, whereas sight takes in everything." Painting, no matter how adventurous in style, is capable of global, all-embracing harmonies. Other mediums are not—or so Gauguin believed, as do most of the painters at work today.

In these paintings all unity is disrupted, all harmony turned against itself.

These comforting harmonies of Western painting have never been under an attack as harsh, as insidious as the one today's young picture-makers have launched in the past few seasons. They don't subject painting's tradition to hit-and-run attacks, as did the Pop artists with their ironies, and the Dadaists with their absurdist antics. David Salle's disjunctions touch every device of his medium, question each of its conventions. It is possible, for the first time, to visualize the end of painting—not simply to declare it in the name of conceptualism or to fear it in the name of modernist history, but to walk into a gallery and see an image made of paint and canvas in which all unity is disrupted, all harmony turned against itself.

If we insist, we can call Salle a painter. That is what he calls himself, and of course the label is correct, after a fashion. The trouble is that it encourages wishful thinking. To see Salle as just another hot young painter is to put on blinkers. It is to shield the eyes from the cultural stresses and strains his art brings into view. Diversity, conflict, chaos—this three-word scenario has been played out often enough in politics and the arts. Yet, as I've suggested, painting stood apart. It preserved a kind of innocence, perhaps because paint on canvas is so mute and self-sufficient. Painted images are so securely contained within the edges of the canvas. Now that innocence is gone, along with the visual harmonies it sustained. Hence the melancholy in Salle's art. He faces up to a loss that most artists manage to ignore. And he appears to recognize that painting's loss of innocence may well be a sign that cultural diversity is drifting from episodic conflict to ultimate chaos. Hence the dread in his pictures. ■

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Judith Crist

Beatty's Ambitious Try

1981 may not have been the best or worst of movie years, but it had its offerings of excellence. Even with some of last month's latecomers unpreviewed at this writing, we could compile that traditional ten best list: *Chariots of Fire*, *Ragtime*, *Prince of the City*, *S.O.B.*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*, *Atlantic City*, *True Confessions*, *On Golden Pond*, *Blood Wedding*, and if you need replacements for any of the above, consider *Stevie*, *Quartet*, *Superman II*, *The Last Métro*, *Gallipoli*, *City of Women*, *Arthur*, *Body Heat*....

Warren Beatty's *Reds* merits listing if only for its ambitious concept, its moments of brilliance, its texture, and its sincerity. Much like David Lean's screen version of *Doctor Zhivago*, it attempts to combine character study, romance, and the Russian Revolution—and falls victim to its variety of focus.

Beatty as John Reed, running to board a Russian gun wagon (left) and with Keaton, in *Reds*.

Beatty not only stars, he produced, directed, and collaborated on the screenplay with Trevor Griffiths, and he has gone far beyond the *Zhivago* concept. *Reds* is Beatty's biography of John Reed, the American journalist and radical leader whose *Ten Days That Shook the World* remains the best eyewitness account of the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in 1917 and who, dying in Russia in 1920 at 33, is the only American buried in the Kremlin. Reed's career in the film includes a condensed history of American radicalism in the 1915-20 period (the International Workers of the World led by Big Bill Haywood, the Socialist Party, and the emergence of the Communist Party from a left-wing Socialist splinter group); it includes the avant-garde-intellectual circles of the period, from Greenwich Village to Provincetown and back. Its "personal" story is of Reed's relationship with Louise Bryant, an aspiring writer-feminist, a stormy and, as depicted, torrid romance that proved the triumph of love and marriage over recurrent claims to (and attempts at) independence of careers and sexual freedom.

Further—and most fascinatingly—Beatty has reached for an historical perspective, with 32 contemporaries of Reed and Bryant commenting on them and/or on their time as "witnesses." With close-ups of their wonderfully aged faces (in their late seventies to nineties, a number have died since filming began several years ago), they provide a magnificent temporal contrast to the youthful beauty of both Beatty and Diane Keaton as the couple in their prime. Unfortunately, the "witnesses" are not identified, and only a few will recognize, as I was able to, even Roger Baldwin, Henry Miller (his four-letter-word is a help), Adela Rogers St. John, Hamilton Fish, George Jessel, Rebecca West, and Arthur Mayer.

To fulfill these ambitions, Beatty and his editors (the gifted Dede Allen has served as co-executive producer as well as co-editor) have culled out of oceans of film (shot in England, Finland, and Spain, as well as the U.S.) three hours and 15 minutes (plus a 15-minute intermission) of frequently dazzling action-filled film. But there is scarcely a pause for introspection or intensity. The overall rhythm becomes a seesawing between a "tumultuous" romance and an equally "tumultuous" social history, and both frequently verge on the tedious. The spectacular—whether it is a party convention, hordes in Petrograd, a clash between Red and White Russian armies, a ski trek across frozen Finnish wastelands—minimizes personal relationships; the intimate drama in turn tends to trivialize the larger social upheavals. By intermission, after nearly two hours, the message seems to be that love is a many-splendored revolution.

Only two stars as charismatic as Beatty and Keaton could succeed, as they indeed do, in holding the attention, but even they, revealing themselves early on (as well-conceived and well-portrayed characters should), become repetitious. In contrast, the relatively brief portraits —Jack Nicholson's of Eugene O'Neill, who gets all the good lines; Maureen Stapleton's of Emma Goldman, who makes us long for more about this compassionate idealist—create the deepest impression. For all of Reed's comings and goings, for all of Bryant's teary-eyed avowals of independence, it is the vignettes of time, place, and public personalities that overshadow them.

Granted Beatty's grandiose scheme,

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the pedantry of its exposition is almost—but not quite—excusable. There is overdetailing of party politics, of sexual couplings—and ellipses where explanation is called for, particularly in recording the American political climate and labor scene. But what does work—a sense of relationship, a sense of history, spectacle that is to the point—is extraordinary, and the ambition is admirable.

More conventional romance is on hand in Arthur Penn's **Four Friends**, written by Steven Tesich. With *Eyewitness* behind him and his adaptation of *The World According to Garp* ahead of us, Tesich has returned to the autobiographical material he touched upon in his first screenplay and major success, the perceptive and joyous *Breaking Away*. But Tesich—and Penn—are in a more serious and ambitious mood in this story of an immigrant lad and three friends whom we get to know as members of the high school class of 1961 who are coming of age in the midwestern steel town of East Chicago, Illinois. In this peculiarly contrived and too frequently incredible tale, it becomes all too clear too soon that we are being told a morality tale about the American Dream.

The protagonist, Danilo, brought from Yugoslavia by his mother to join the father he has never seen, arrives with and retains a glowing concept of that dream, only to be alienated over the years from his father, who has found America only in terms of steel-mill grime and sweat. The focal point of Danilo's youth and young manhood is Georgia, whom he, David, and Tom are all courting. She is their cultural guru and sex goddess, convinced that she has inherited the soul of Isadora Duncan, that epitome of style. "Without style you're dead ducks, kiddos," she assures her swains. Danilo writes her love poems but when she decides that "my days as a virgin are drawing to a close" and offers herself, he hesitates and is lost.

The friends separate and somehow the Tesich spell—woven as before from the familiar trivia of youth and from recognition of the bonds and angers and understandings of family relationships—is shattered. The story's ambitions begin to show when Danilo goes off to college and becomes involved with the very rich, with lurid melodrama and inklings of incest. This is, we realize, a structured story of "success" and its emptiness; of "roots," as Danilo goes wandering in search thereof; of "obsession" as Georgia, having bedded Tom and wedded David and gone off to find herself, comes wandering in and out of Danilo's life in a series of incredible coincidences that leave him slavering. And it is, of course, the story of "an era," as we glance in passing at Freedom Riders and peace demonstrators, see Georgia as a hippie, and Danilo with and then without a beard.

But finally we realize that we have been given contrived reportage about four people who are ultimately reunited. We are shown the ties but never quite understand why they bind.

Penn has taken pains to cast relative unknowns. Craig Wasson gives Danilo a resilience and a blend of strength and naivete; Reed Birney is remarkable indeed as Danilo's college roommate whose warmth and humor transcend a crippling illness; and Miklos Simon and Elizabeth Lawrence are superb Slavic Gothic as Danilo's unassimilated parents. Jodi Thelen exudes a small-town-siren appeal, but beyond offering the pathos of a young woman suddenly "tired of being young," she remains small-town. They all suit their time and place and echo familiar situations. With Penn, Tesich has looked back with a clear eye, but it is ultimately blurred by allegations of significance. The "message" stands in the way of the movie—and we are ultimately only onlookers.

***Four Friends* (from top): Craig Wasson, Tim Metzler, Jodi Thelen, Michael Huddleston.**

There's a male-female relationship at the center of **Butterfly**, too—but this one is incestuous. James M. Cain's 1947 novel comes to the screen adapted, produced, and directed by Matt Cimber. Set in 1937 on the Nevada-Arizona border, it is, despite the desert locale, a steamy tale of a church-going man's reunion with his 17-year-old daughter, Kady. The caretaker of a now-defunct silver mine, Daddy had been deserted 10 years before by his wife—named Belle, of course—who left with her lover and two young daughters. Now the younger daughter arrives, ostensibly to seduce Daddy, but actually, we soon learn, to steal some silver from the mine because the owner's son fathered her baby and refused to defy his parents and marry her.

Well, it's hard on Daddy, especially when he has to massage her aching back in the bathtub after a hard day stealing silver from the mine (they manage to get out and take to town—in one unnoticed load—enough ore to net them some 15 pounds of pure silver at 90 cents an ounce). Kady's sister, baby, and ready-for-marriage beau arrive to underline Daddy's paternal guilts; even Belle arrives, with her lover. She dies on the verge of Telling All, but it's her lover who then taunts Daddy with The Secret. This prompts Daddy to murder him, louse up Kady's wedding plans, and leap on her lustfully. Someone, however, Has Been Watching and the two are arrested for incest. At the pre-trial hearing The Truth comes out—anybody here remember The Birthmark Bit? Everybody has a happy ending except Dad who—it's the hallmark of Cain—has the corpse of Belle's lover to cope with.

This two-penny nonsense is worth detailing only because Stacy Keach is effective as the "quiet" man battling with lust; Lois Nettleton contributes a touching cameo as the worn-out Belle; Orson Welles, bespectacled and bearded, has an absolute ball in a couple of courtroom scenes as a feisty old judge; and Ann Dane makes a mark as the shy elder sister. The film "introduces" Pia Zadora, a 20-year veteran of stage musicals and nightclubs (she began in her childhood), as the 17-year-old Kady. A tousle-haired petite blonde costumed in see-through low-cut dresses and seemingly nothing else, she flings her body about in sinuous style. It is unfortunate that the heavy, pasty-faced makeup, presumably applied to make her look like a teenager, detracts from her charms. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann

Two Cheers for Two Plays

MARTHA SWOPE

Hurt, Mackay, and Dillon portray three Southern sisters in *Crimes of the Heart*.

The Pulitzer Prize for drama is looking up—a little, anyway. Since 1957, when it was given to America's greatest play, O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the only time the Pulitzer award hasn't made me cringe at least slightly was when it went to Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* two years ago. This year it has gone to a first play by Beth Henley called **Crimes of the Heart**, produced off-Broadway in 1980 and now moved to Broadway, in which a limited but authentic dramatist's voice can be heard.

The success of the play is, to some extent, a victory over this production. Henley is a Mississippian who writes about small-town life in her home state, and this has been taken as an almost arbitrary injunction to treat her play like one more slice off a standard Southern loaf. In point of fact, Henley is a quietly tenacious pursuer of horror, a writer shaken into pitch-black comedy by the buried terrors in the superficially smooth, tabby-cat lives she has seen. The trouble with the tone of this production directed by Melvin Bernhardt is that, for too long a time, it leads you to expect one more hyperdetailed, gabby decline into hominy-grits entropy. The play has figuratively to fight its way through the opening half hour or so of this production before it lets the author establish what she is getting at—that, under this molasses meandering, there is madness, stark madness; and that the only factor that keeps these characters out of asylums (insofar as they *are* kept out) is their mad humor about themselves, which translates almost chillingly into our looking at them as comic.

The play concerns three sisters. (Forget Chekhov—there's no connection.) They are played by: Lizbeth Mackay as the sister who lives in the house whose kitchen we see; Mia Dillon as the sister who has just returned from her home with her husband nearby; and Mary Beth Hurt as the sister who has just returned from Los Angeles. As the play opens, Mackay comes into the (mammoth) kitchen, puts a birthday candle in a cookie, and silently sings "Happy Birthday"; and my teeth clenched in readiness for another drawling ode to Loneliness. But in contrast to this opening tonality, here are some of the matters that come to light. Mackay is much more upset about the death of an old horse than by her grandfather's stroke and coma. Dillon has shot her husband because she doesn't like his looks and, while he lay bleeding, offered him lemonade; as part of his criminal prosecution of her, he sends her lawyer some photographs of her taken *in flagrante* with a 15-year-old black boy; she says the pictures will ruin her but manages to forget about them completely for 20 minutes or so. And Hurt, who comes on in a mini skirt as the standard Hollywood returnee who has been lying to her family about her career, discloses that she has been hospitalized for psychosis. In short, what begins as more wistfulness under the wisteria eventually becomes a compound of giggle and decay on the edge of an abyss.

I take Henley as serious, not as a parodist—a lightweight daughter of Faulkner rather than a diluted Tennessee Williams. This opinion is strengthened by a reading of her subsequent play, *The Miss Firecracker Contest*, which has already been produced in Dallas and in Jackson, Mississippi, and which continues to probe the grotesquely comic vein of horror in a small town in her state. And still another play of hers, *The Wake of Jamey Foster*, will have been produced in Hartford, Connecticut, by the time this review appears. She is 29.

To praise Dillon and Mackay and Hurt would be like praising a jeweler for fixing a watch: If he can't do that, what *can* he do? For competent actors, these roles are easy—which is to compliment the author, not knock the performers. Bernhardt's approach, to let the horror seep in slowly, is better suited to conventional suspense than to a play that needs an index of its import from the start. It isn't blatant weirdness that's wanted, but something akin to what Eric Thompson did with Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular* or Charles Marowitz (in London) with Orton's *Loot*, where we were subtly but swiftly informed that the play was stranger than it seemed to be.

Crimes has faults. Too much of the action occurs offstage and is reported. Frequently Henley uses an irritating device: Character B repeats the last words of what Character A has just said. ("She shot him in the stomach." "In the stomach?") But she has struck a rich, if

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not inexhaustible, dramatic lode: the tension between the fierce lurking lunacy underlying the small-town life she knows so well and the sunny surface that tries to accommodate it. *Crimes* moves to no real resolution, but this is part of its power. It presents a condition that, in minuscule, implies much about the state of the world, as well as the state of Mississippi, and about human chaos; it says, "Resolution is not my business. Ludicrously horrifying honesty is."

Mass Appeal by Bill C. Davis is his first Broadway production, too. It, too, arrived from off-Broadway —and from the same place that presented Henley's play, the Manhattan Theater Club. And here, too, the relation between script and production—though very different from Henley's case—is what struck me first.

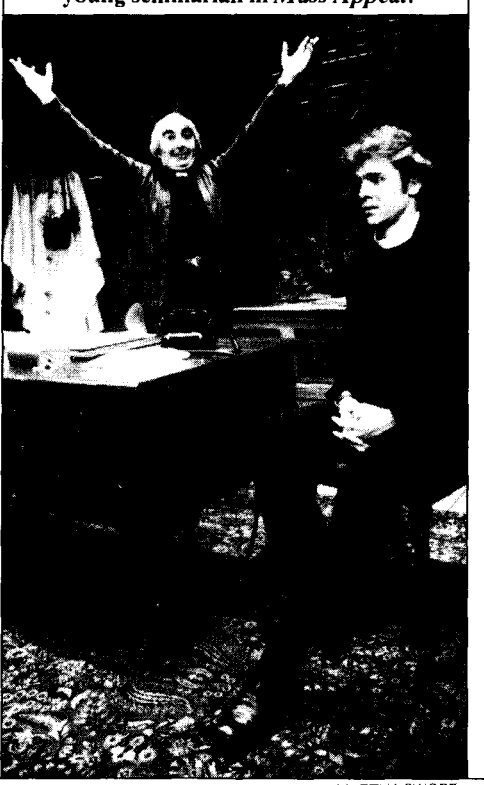
Davis's play has only two characters, a veteran Roman Catholic priest and a young seminarian studying nearby. The priest is skillful and pastorally pragmatic, a man whose religious vocation has not kept him from developing charm as an aid to that vocation. The seminarian is consumingly devout but pastorally unpolished. The two roles have been cast with astonishing aptness. The priest is played by Milo O'Shea, a practiced charmer of an actor, at his savory best. The seminarian is Michael O'Keefe (he was Robert Duvall's son in *The Great Santini*), an appealing young man of fine feeling who is, artistically, a cub. O'Shea is a wise theater possum, canny in his native habitat; O'Keefe is emotionally genuine but has virtually no technique—I felt that someone had gone through his script and underlined the words for him to emphasize. Whatever control he can muster I think he owes to Geraldine Fitzgerald, the gifted actress who makes her directorial debut with this play. And I also think that she hadn't much more to do with O'Shea than to give him a bit of the rough side of her tongue when he caroled too freely.

The two-part set, reticently designed by David Gropman, contains the priest's office and the priest's pulpit. Davis's decision to use only two characters never makes his play thin or mechanical, though like many another playwright, he should light a dramaturgic candle at the shrine of Alexander Graham Bell. But Davis has wit, insight, and a turn for dramatic rhetoric; his comedy-drama is launched easily, sustained well, and is vividly, if incompletely, characterized. His play leaves us with a question about its author. He can write for actors, but can he write for himself? Which is to say, can he do more than construct a good show? Can he unflinchingly face the interesting issues that he raises?

Here he has taken a classic, still serviceable, dramatic situation. A comfily established mature professional—in this case, a priest—is unsettled by the uncompromised fervor of a beginner in his profession. The priest is both disturbed and touched by the youth. The older man tries to get the younger one to temper his fervor in his preaching debut so as not to attack the congregation's materialist vanity; he also tries to get the youth to temper the truth about his past to avoid expulsion from the seminary. On both counts the older man fails.

The second issue is the crucial one. Under questioning by the head of the seminary (whom we never see), the youth confesses that for three years before he entered the church, he tried to find love with women and with men, and he's expelled. He has no regrets about admitting the facts, but he wanted passionately to stay in the church. He tells the priest: "During those three years—whenever someone I loved, loved me, I did everything to keep it constant.... But to go through all that—to worry about who's got the upper hand—who's going to change first—it made the love worthless." Now that he has found the one constant love, free of maneuver, he must give it up because, in effect, he didn't find it first. The priest is so moved by the youth's expulsion that he preaches against it. He expects that his sermon will get him transferred to Iowa—apparently a synonym for Siberia—but there he will find street corners to preach on, as he did when he was a young deacon, which was the time when he felt closest to Christ.

O'Shea and O'Keefe as a priest and a young seminarian in *Mass Appeal*.



MARTHA SWOPE

But Davis doesn't fully confront the two main issues that *Mass Appeal* presents. The priest tells us of his troubles with his parents and says: "By the time my father left and my mother died, I was so confused that I didn't want to be near man, woman, or piano leg. Celibacy came naturally to me." Naturally, perhaps, but when he first took over this church, he wanted so desperately to be loved by his parishioners that he broke out in a rash all over his body. And now we feel that part of his attraction to the seminarian is that the young man has known so much of love, of differing kinds, that the older man has never experienced. I don't suggest that there ought to have been a homosexual relation between them; but this intelligent priest would have had some knowledge of this attraction, some curiosity, some sense of forbidden mysteries in the youth, possibly some fear of them. An immense and trembly psychological area is noted, then merely skirted.

Second, the ending. It's hemstitched. When the priest asks the youth what he'll do after expulsion, he simply says, "I'll be fine," then disappears. To what? He did a lot of social work when he was a prospective priest; will he be able to throw himself back into that work without the goal of priesthood? Is he going to have to fall back on physical love? Davis sayeth not.

Worse, he has tacked on an upbeat Broadway finish—the Iowa street-corner blather. The original ending, already published, is the priest's appeal for the youth from his pulpit, with no indication that he really risked the loss of that pulpit. The priest had been genuinely moved by his experience with the youth, but not enough to change. The original ending was closer to reality. The new ending is closer to the box office.

Davis has shown that he can write plays; now let him write one. He has the charm of his priest. He needs the commitment of his seminarian. ■

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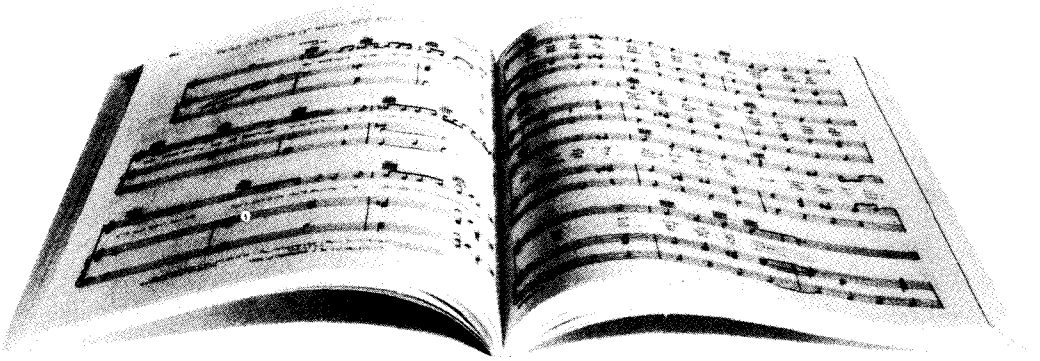

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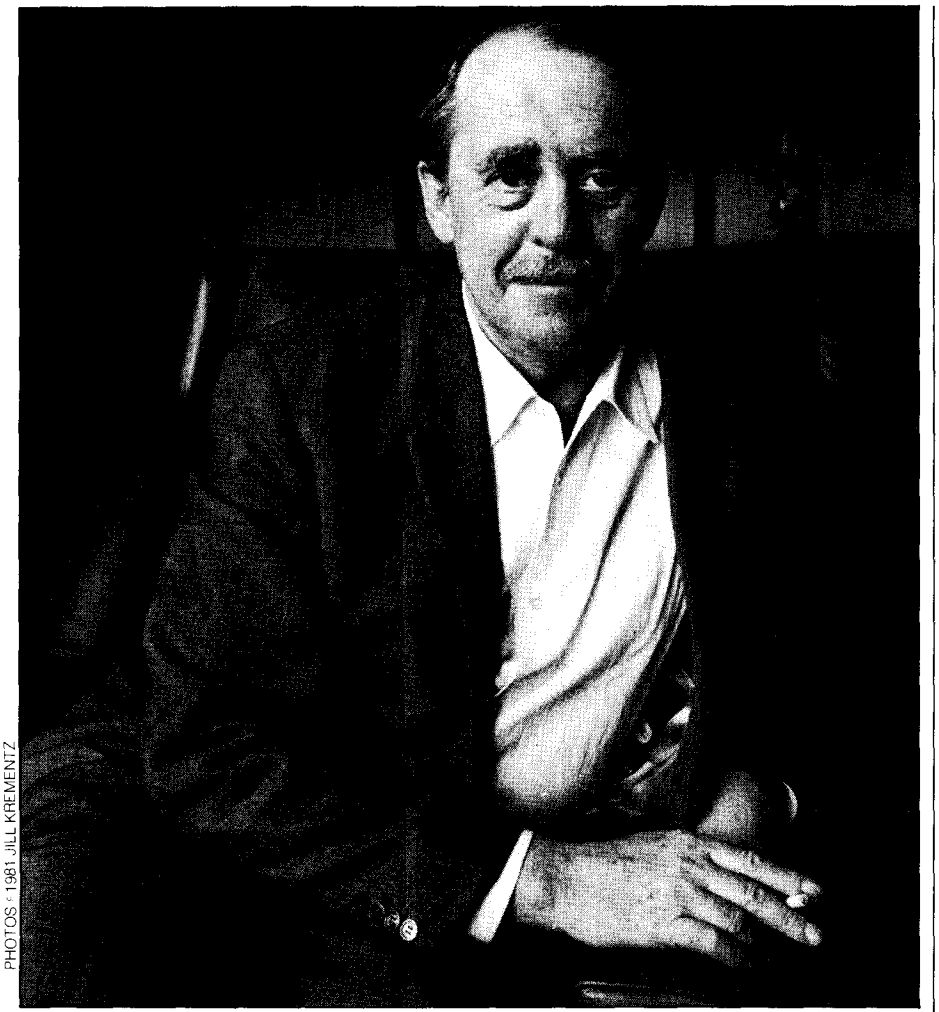

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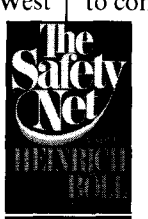
Nobel laureate Böll: A complicated novel of terrorism in West Germany.

Heinrich Böll's Cop Out

The Safety Net
by Heinrich Böll, Alfred A. Knopf, 299 pp., $13.95

Reviewed by Anthony Burgess

LET US, before appraising the book, consider the situation. The setting is West Germany, now. Fritz Tolm, old and ailing, is a newspaper owner who has just been appointed president of a great cannibalistic consortium. He loves his wife, Käthe. He loves his children too, though his first son, Herbert, belongs to the "alternative society" and his second son, Rolf, has just emerged from a phase of political activism. Rolf, to complicate matters for the reader, has begotten two sons of his own by different women, and both are named Holger. Tolm and his family live in a fear characteristic of our time—that of assassination by terrorists. They have done no wrong; they merely happen to be rich and prominent. Death can come in any of a number of ingenious ways—a mechanical bird flying in through the window, a bicycle, or a whole fleet of bicycles (they live in the flat, bicycle-riding North), with explosives cached in the struts. Both Pliefger and Plotteti, colleagues of Tolm, narrowly escaped assassination from, respectively, a cigarette packet and a birthday cake.



Another mode of oppression is provided by the very device employed to keep out the terrorists. Holzpuke is an officer in charge of the security forces protecting the Tolm family, and in charge of Holzpuke is Dollmer, and in charge of Dollmer is Stabski. Hubert Hendler, one of the security guards, is the lover of Sabine, Tolm's daughter, herself married to a certain Erwin Fischer, and Hendler has a wife named Helga. All these damned names, and none of them attached to memorable voices or bodies (except for Tolm's, which has to be looked after by his masseur-chauffeur Blurtmehl, and how far can Blurtmehl, with his professionally strong hands, be trusted?). You see, then, what this very contemporary situation is. The terrorists will, if they can, explode human entities with bombs; but the security forces are always dissecting those same entities and building dossiers. You have the feeling that the potential victims are far more under suspicion than the potential assailants. Go, complaining of theft, to any European police station, and you will soon find that you yourself are treated as the thief. This is one of our European diseases.

The material of Böll's novel is, as you can see, very apt for a Robert Ludlum-style best seller. But Böll is a Nobel prize-man and hence an ornament of West German literature. The serious practitioner of literature—as opposed to the artifacts of Ludlum, Jack Higgins, and other ornaments of the supermarket bookstands—is less concerned with the brashness of violent action than the conversion of this into ideas. Everything is in the mind, and the book is mostly a series of interior monologues that not only apprehend the future but rove over the past. The trouble with Böll's interior monologues is that they all have the same vocabulary and rhythm, so that it is not

Anthony Burgess is a contributing editor of *Saturday Review*. His most recent novel is *Earthly Powers*.

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always easy to know who is doing the thinking. The confusion is exacerbated by his assuming that we know who "he" or "she" is without his telling us. This confusing pronomination becomes very annoying toward the end when one of the terrorists gives herself up, booby-trapped bike as well, and we have to wait a page or two to discover that she is Veronica Zelger, former wife of Rolf Tolm and mother of one of the two Holgers. And, flooded with names as we have been, we have to do a little thinking to remember precisely where we have met this character before.

No blame is to be attached to the translator, who has done a superb job. I have read the book in the original—*Fürsorgliche Belagerung*—and the Böll tone has been carried over faultlessly into American English. Not that Böll is difficult to translate. He specializes in a plainness that is at the opposed pole to Günter Grass's dictionary-rummaging ebullience. It has been said that Böll and Grass restored a cleansed German to the denazified by means of, respectively, avoiding rhetoric and hurling the whole vocabulary. I do not particularly care for Böll's style but he is entitled to use it. What worries me about him is his incapacity to vary tone and rhythm, to differentiate between voices.

Of the importance of his theme I have no doubt at all. Of the contemporary German agony that Böll conveys I can speak only with a sympathy that makes me want to be more sympathetic to this novel than Böll will allow me to be. Consider the author's own situation. The son of a liberal Catholic pacifist family, Böll was drafted into the *Wehrmacht* and wounded four times before being taken prisoner by the Americans. His first novel, and perhaps his best, was *The Train Was on Time*, which, from the comparatively innocent vantage point of 1949, looked at an agony that belonged to the past. But the agony that the Nazis inflicted on Europe was, at least, based on an ideological formulation: The nightmare had roots in a sort of logic. Today, in Germany as elsewhere, terrorism exists for its own sake, and its practitioners are not set off from the rest of us with brown shirts or brassards. Forty years ago there was a mad logic; today there is only madness.

Solution? It is not the novelist's job to present solutions, merely to show, with the bright light of compression, things as they are. But Böll puts into the mouth of old Tolm a statement that suggests a half-baked solution of the author himself:

"Kathe," he said, "there's something I have to tell you."

"Yes?"

"You know I have always loved you. And there's something else you must know."

"Yes, what is it?"

"That some form of socialism must come, must prevail. . . .

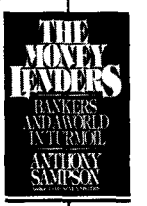
So socialism comes the the nightmare ends? No, that won't do at all. Böll's ancestral faith ought to tell him, as well as his readers, that there's no solution except learning to understand the terrible mixed-up nature of the human soul. His novel lacks the depth of a philosophical or theological matrix. The complication of its cast list is a substitute for complexity. This novel needed work. But probably a Nobel prize-winner is above that sort of thing. ■

The Banks and the Third World

The Money Lenders
by Anthony Sampson, The Viking Press, 320 pp., $16.95

Reviewed by Andrew Tobias

"IT IS A SPECIAL GIFT of many bankers," writes Anthony Sampson, "that they can make the world sound more boring than it seemed before." It is Sampson's gift to make it clearer and more interesting. Having written previously of the international arms trade, the international oil companies, and the international arrogance of ITT, he gives us now global banking. His special emphasis: the relationship between bankers and developing nations.



The Money Lenders is thus about David Rockefeller (who at Harvard "was undistinguished except as a collector of beetles, which he still is") and about Zaire (which "needs a steelworks," one banker told Sampson, "like it needs central heating"). It is also about wealth (Citibank loaned the Shah's sister $55 million for a housing project), corruption (she built a palace), and poverty: the juxtaposition of financial towers and global slums. It is an important book that grew out of the author's work as editorial adviser to the (Willy) Brandt Commission on the so-called North/South deadlock: the gross disparity between the rich industrialized nations of the North and the impoverished nonindustrialized nations of the South. It is a problem manifested in Mexicans and Haitians and Salvadorans flooding north across our Southern border but that extends even beyond swimming range of our shores.

To the Italian bankers of the 1300s, Sampson's native England was itself "a wild developing country on the edge of their world, a kind of medieval Zaire." Its exports of wool offered prospects of big profits, "but with its despotic monarchs, its tribal wars and corrupt courtiers it had a high country risk." So high, in fact, that King Edward III decided in 1327—honor be damned—to default. The Italian banks collapsed. (Centuries later, Sampson tells us, another English-speaking ruler would hold the Italians in little better regard—"I don't give a shit about the lira," Richard Nixon is reported to have said—but this time the Italians squeaked through.)

Nineteenth-century British bankers saw in America "a very unreliable developing country, with a black record of embezzlement, fraudulent prospectuses, and default." Maryland and Pennsylvania were among the deadbeats. Mississippi *still* has not made good debts it repudiated in the last century. "There really should be lunatic asylums for nations as well as individuals," Sampson quotes a British clergyman of the time who was outraged over America, "a nation with whom no contract can be made, because none will be kept."

Sampson wonders why one nation develops successfully while another does not—an issue of more than passing interest to the world's 800 million "absolute poor." And he wonders which of today's developing countries will be tomorrow's success stories. Take Brazil. Brazil, $60 billion in debt, nearly half to American banks, looks to one of Sampson's British bankers "rather as America looked to us

Andrew Tobias's new book, *The Invisible Bankers: Everything the Insurance Industry Never Wanted You to Know*, will be published in February.

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a hundred years ago. It could collapse, but it could become one of the great powers of the world."

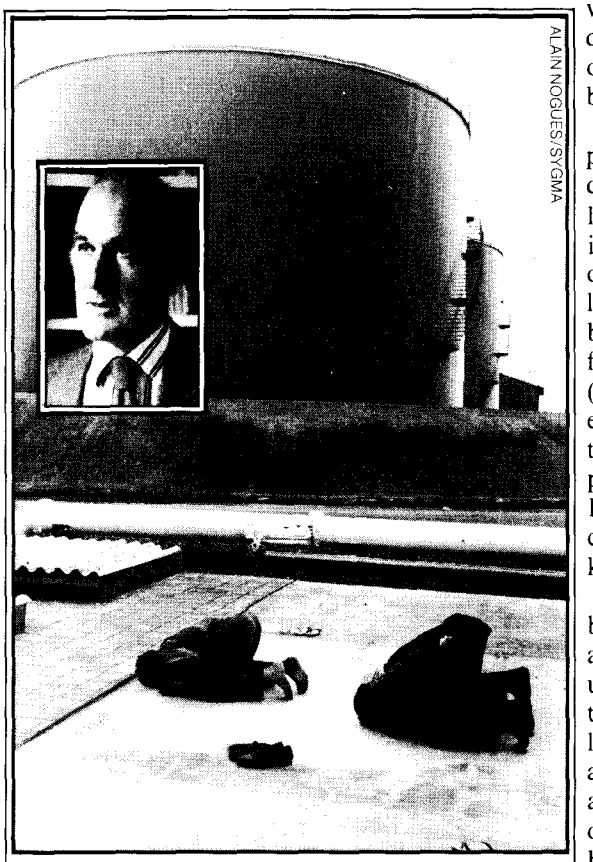
If it collapses, what happens to Citibank? And if something happens to Citibank, what happens to the rest of the financial fabric stretched tight around the world? Just because the results would be so catastrophic, it is assumed that the Federal Reserve would never allow a major U.S. bank to collapse, which in effect makes it lender-of-last-resort to the entire world. But if that's true, asks Sampson—if government aid in one form or another can be counted on to bail out the banks—then what risk do the banks really take? (A Fed bail-out, such as forced merger into a stronger bank, would be painful. But where is the banks' pain if U.S. government aid to Poland or Pakistan enables those countries to stay afloat?) And, he wonders, if the banks do not take extra risk in lending to risky countries, knowing that governments will bail them out in case of emergency, how do they justify charging extra interest? "The poorer the country," writes Sampson, "the higher the profits." He quotes Walter Wriston acknowledging how much more profitable the Third World was for Citibank than domestic banking: "Round here," Wriston said, "it's Jakarta that pays the check."

To keep the dominoes standing, the word *default* has been practically excised from the megabankers' lexicon. Loans are instead "rolled over," "rescheduled," "stretched out." New York City did not default when it failed to meet interest payments on its bonds in November 1974; it merely declared a "moratorium." "Have you ever watched a rugby football match when one of the players loses his trousers?" a British politician asked Sampson. "They all immediately go into a scrum to make sure that no one can see, while they produce another pair of pants. That's how bankers behave when they see a default."

Sampson describes the precarious world financial system as a gigantic game of chicken, in which the authorities must keep the system safe enough to rescue the banks from collapse, "but not so visibly safe that it encouraged them to be rash."

It was easier in the old days. British banks during the 19th century had the force of the Empire behind them: the army and navy. "The word *default* had some validity; for the creditors were in a position to take control of the assets abroad, as at home." When Egypt fell behind in its payments, Britain took control of Egypt. If Poland or Zaire (or Italy, for that matter) defaulted, would we send in our Rapid Deployment Force?

The oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 sent unimaginable billions flowing out of most of the countries of the world into the coffers of a lucky few. Those few then deposited the cash with a handful of Western banks, which lent it back to the uncreditworthy multitude (who needed it to pay for their oil). Rather than lend money to uncreditworthy countries themselves, the Saudis, et al., graciously allowed the global bankers to take the risk. The process of shuffling these billions around is called recycling, but it may not be environmentally sound. "Rather than refuse deposits," Sampson quotes a historian, "the Medicis succumbed to the temptation of seeking an outlet for surplus cash in making dangerous loans to princes." The fact that Medici is no longer a big name in banking might have been a caution to Western bankers eager to accept short-term deposits from the Middle East and lend them, long-term, to Poland and Brazil. It wasn't.


ALAIN NOGUES/SYGMA

Anthony Sampson (inset) and three Saudi Arabians taking time out for prayers at work.

This is not to say that the OPECkers could bring us to our knees by threatening to withdraw their billions. "It is a closed system," says Citibank's Walter Wriston. If the Kuwaitis take their money out of Citibank or Chase and put it in Switzerland, suddenly the Swiss banks have that much more money to lend and Chase merely borrows it back—if not from an OPEC nation directly, well, then, from the Swiss. What difference does it make? "The end-of-the-world syndrome sells a lot of books," Sampson quotes Wriston.

But if Kuwait has no special power over the money lenders, the debtor nations may. "If I owe a million dollars, then I am lost," a Brazilian economist is quoted. "But if I owe fifty billions, the bankers are lost." Trite but true: The deeper the banks get in, the tougher it becomes for them to get out. Will the Fed (Bank of England, Bundesbank, etc.) prop up the money lenders if they need propping? Will the U.S. provide the aid the Brazils and Polands need to avert default? If not, could panic be averted and default kept from spreading?

In Sampson's view, today's global bankers are really dispensing foreign aid in a politically palatable form, unnoticed by the voters (unnoticed, that is, until they need rescuing). So long as bank examiners are willing to agree that loans to Zaire are sound and worth what they're carried for on the books, even if repayment is being pushed ever farther into the future, the bank passes inspection. The banks won't call in their chips because they know no chips would be forthcoming. So the debts are rolled over, and on the emperor waltzes, Sampson argues, stark naked. (Bankers argue that their loans for the most part *are* sound; and that they do not amount to a very great proportion of their total loan portfolio in any event.) Further, as Sampson sees it, this aid, masquerading as solid bank loans, is *good*. The industrialized nations of the world *must* aid their poorer neighbors, he argues, because rich and poor are interdependent to a far greater degree than is commonly acknowledged.

Sampson is appalled by the low level of official aid traveling from North to South. He paints a vivid picture of the International Monetary Fund, whose secretaries fly first class but whose disci-

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pline on wayward nations leads to deprivation, riots, and dictatorships (but also to lower inflation and, it is hoped, in the long run, prosperity). And there is an excellent chapter on the World Bank, with a poignant description of recently retired president Robert S. McNamara, former Secretary of Defense. Writes Sampson:

To some people who crossed his path there was something comic about this tireless American, always looking the same whether in the African bush or the Brazilian jungle, always determined to measure the unmeasurable, to keep to his timetable in villages which had never seen a clock.... Always he insisted on statistics and measurement; but behind the numbers he had his own picture of half-starving families in the bush.

There is a thoughtful chapter, too, on the bankers' role in South Africa; there is an ample chapter on the tax-avoidance delights of Grand Cayman, an island with more registered corporations than inhabitants, and one to whose sunny skies Sampson obviously took a shining.

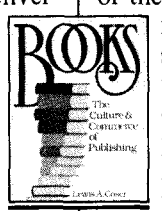
That Sampson manages to guide us through several centuries to the present and then to cover so much of the globe without ever being dull and rarely hard to follow attests to his narrative skill. That he manages to avoid painting his bankers as fools or villains, despite a sharp critical eye, makes his reporting all the more persuasive and enlightening. ■

The Big-Buck Book Biz

Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing
by Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin, and Walter W. Powell, Basic Books, 396 pp., $19

Reviewed by Robert R. Harris

A SUCCESSFUL WRITER tells a colleague about her mailman, who, after delivering books for several days, asks if she is a writer. "Yes," she says, "and the next day he shows up with a book about metafiction under one arm and the manuscript of his novel under the other!"



"My exterminator is a novelist," her stone-faced colleague rejoins.

Americans have an overwhelming need for self-expression. Everyone, it sometimes seems, thinks that he is a writer and feels that he has an inalienable right to be published. Poetry is most attractive to narcissists. Its advantage is that it is usually short. And not many people know whether it's any good.

The fact is that most people are *not* writers. Yet they persist, desperately trying to break into print. For this reason alone, *Books* seems destined for popular success. But *Books* offers little succor to would-be writers. The authors cite the odds against getting unsolicited novels published: 29,998 to 2. They reckon that fewer than 1 percent of all "over-the-transom" manuscripts are published. And 60 percent of the editors interviewed said that they received more than 1,000 unsolicited projects a year. As you might guess, most are not even read.

Robert R. Harris is the literary editor of *Saturday Review*.

Books presents a fascinating overview of the book business, and publishing is first and foremost a business. Total sales in 1980 were about $7 billion; the entire industry would rank only 46th on the *Fortune* 500. "Trade" publishing, which consists of the hardcover and paperback books we buy in bookstores and other retail outlets, accounts for about one-fourth of total industry sales.

The authors discuss trade, college text, and scholarly publishing. They interviewed editors, agents, writers, et al., and conducted "field observations" of publishing houses in operation. As professional sociologists are wont, they present their data in the guise of scientific research. It is debatable whether this kind of work by social scientists is truly scientific, but the picture of publishing that emerges is mostly accurate.

Even though an individual faces stiff odds against having his book accepted for publication, more than 40,000 books are published each year. Why so many? Publishers do not really know which books will sell. They use a shotgun approach: publish enough, and *something* will hit. In fact, despite recent stabs at marketing research, a publishing chestnut still holds: The cheapest market test for a book is to publish it. Yet bookstores return to publishers 25 to 40 percent of the hardcover books ordered and receive a full refund. Paperback publishers pay big bucks for potential best sellers to insure a "lead" title each month that will draw attention to the publisher's other monthly releases and gain for them prime rack space in drugstores and supermarkets. Nevertheless, within a couple of weeks after publication, 60 percent of paperbacks have their covers stripped for return credit. The books themselves are pulped—more than 100 million of them every year.

Most of what gets published is trash. But publishing's commercialization is nothing new. In 1890, *Publishers Weekly*, an industry trade magazine, piously intoned that "if literature and art are to be treated as common merchandise... it will make commonplace the manners of our people and their intelligence restricted to the counting-room." As the authors point out, book publishing has always had its eye on the mass market, and literary pundits are forever carping.

By focusing on how various kinds of books get published, the authors hit on some of the most controversial aspects of publishing today: conglomeration and the rise of the bookstore chains. From 1965 to 1969, the authors note, at least 23 mergers took place annually; from 1974 to 1978, 15 or more occurred each year. (The trend seems to be on the wane as big corporations discover that publishing isn't exactly a gold mine.) Critics contend that concentration of the industry has harmed the culture as big corporations strive to maximize profits. The Association of American Publishers denies that concentration is a problem, citing the ever-increasing number of publishing firms, primarily small ones. Because of its low capital entry costs (services from editing to printing can be had on a freelance basis) publishing has always been able to spawn new ventures. But the fact remains that small publishers can't possibly go up against the major firms. Most small publishers, the authors point out, specialize in how-to books; "they do not compete in the national market for major works of fiction and nonfiction." To count the mom-and-pop operations along with giants like Simon & Schuster and Random House is specious. Although concentration has led to more emphasis on the bottom line, the authors find little evidence of corporate interference with publishers' decisions to publish specific books or of widespread inside dealing between, say, a conglomerate's hardcover and paperback divisions. Independent publishers, who have fought off take-over attempts, are as much con-

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GOOD TIME BAD TIME

It was the best of times...it was the worst of times. It was a time for crystal chandeliers, caviar, and flowing champagne. It was a time for outrageous scandals, corruption and rebellion. It was a time when a chorus girl could become the mistress of a millionaire. A time when a sexual obsession triggered the murder of a century, and a man's pride held a city for ransom. It was a time when the beautiful, the notorious and the passionate lived like there was no tomorrow.

It was the beginning of an incredible time...

It was "Ragtime."

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cerned with the bottom line as the corporate-owned giants. And everybody yearns for a blockbuster.

So the authors are rightly ambivalent about the effects of conglomeration. Concentration has occurred, but it has not stopped the flow of worthy and controversial books. And it has brought to publishing some benefits, not the least of which are somewhat higher salaries and bigger advances to authors.

The effects of big business's entry into publishing are most evident not in the actions of corporate boards but in the attitudes of a new generation of book editors who are deeply concerned with sales. Sixty percent of the editors interviewed listed commercial prospects as the single most important consideration in publishing a book. And 70 percent said that a book must sell 10,000 to 50,000 copies to break even. This is extraordinary considering that sales of 50,000 will just about put a hardcover book on the best-seller list and that many excellent titles sell fewer than 5,000 copies. It is the editors' sense of the marketplace rather than the directives of far-removed corporate officials that is bad news for many so-called mid-level books (books of quality aimed at audiences of modest size). The authors found that many editors were uncomfortable with the label "gatekeepers of ideas." Most asserted that they only publish books that booksellers would stock and that the public would buy.

Those booksellers are fast becoming a powerful force in publishing. The United States has fewer bookstores per capita than Japan and many European countries, but the two largest chains—Waldenbooks and B. Dalton—with more than 1,200 stores between them, will, if projections are right, account for half of all new general-interest bookstore sales by 1983. Even more than concentration in the ownership of publishing companies, bookseller concentration threatens to homogenize public taste. The same relatively limited number of books is displayed in all the stores. The chains buy books by genre, and computers keep track of what's selling. What isn't is pulled from the shelves; if certain kinds of books are not moving, orders are cut.

BETTMANN ARCHIVE

Early days: The interior of a print shop, circa 1619.

But the problem goes much deeper than the lack of diversity in what is offered to the public. The chain-store book buyers now see books in manuscript. If they place a large order for copies of a book before publication, the publisher increases the print run and revises promotion plans. Having made a commitment to the book through its large order, the chain then promotes it heavily too, and *poof*! a best seller is made. The authors charge that the tail is wagging the dog—that the chains are powerful enough to determine not only what will become a best seller but also whether a book gets published at all. Those who think publishing is some kind of Eastern establishment cabal would be amused to see New York publishing executives scurrying off to B. Dalton's Minneapolis headquarters to check on their books' fates. But it would have behooved the authors to have abandoned their sociological models and to have done a little investigative reporting on just how much decision-making power editors have abdicated to the bookstore chains, and to have pursued further the serious cultural implications of this turn of events.

The authors also fail to investigate fully other of their assertions. They take at face value paperback publishers' complaints that books that are originally published in paperback don't get reviewed. Yet reviewers are not nearly so hostile to original paperbacks as publishers think. In the first year that it gave awards, the National Book Critics Circle nominated an original paperback for its fiction award. At *Saturday Review*, all new books, regardless of whether they are being published in hardcover or paperback, compete for limited review space. But few original paperbacks are worth reviewing. If paperback publishers want their originals to be reviewed, all they need do is publish serious books.

The authors also too quickly repeat the publishers' line on a recent IRS ruling that disallowed the depreciation of the value of books kept in inventory. "Now it is no longer economically feasible," they write, "to maintain stock on many titles and sell them gradually... and now a house that formerly kept titles in print may decide to...destroy [them]." This is a serious problem if works of literature and ideas face the shredder. But are publishers' warehouses really filled to the ceiling with classics and important scholarly works, or are we more likely to find thousands upon thousands of copies of diet books and *Princess Daisy*? The authors do not attempt to find out and fail to mention specific titles destroyed as a result of the tax law. Given the dismal fare available in bookstores, maybe the IRS isn't so far off the mark in treating most publishers' "products just like tools, toilet paper, and detergents." ■

Fiction Briefs

Marco Polo, If You Can
by William F. Buckley Jr.
Doubleday, 275 pp., $13.95

MARCO POLO, IF YOU CAN begins with an epigraph from *Saturday Review* (January 11, 1975) in which Senator J. William Fulbright speculated that, although the U.S. was apparently humiliated when the Soviets downed our U-2 spy plane in 1960, perhaps our government leaders had craftily planned the precise confrontation that occurred. William F. Buckley's deft new thriller concocts a scenario in which the embarrassing incident is actually a secret triumph.

Buckley recasts Francis Gary Powers as Blackford Oakes, the same hero he has used in his three previous novels (*Saving the Queen*, *Stained Glass*, *Who's on*

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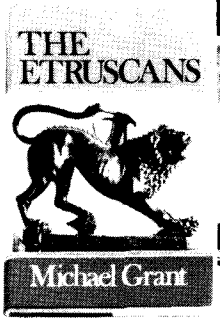

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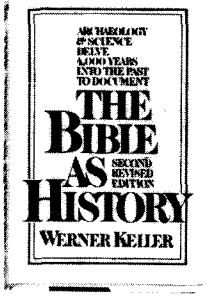
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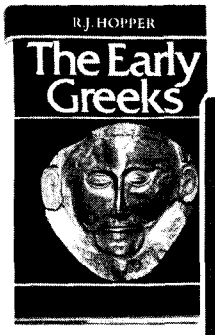

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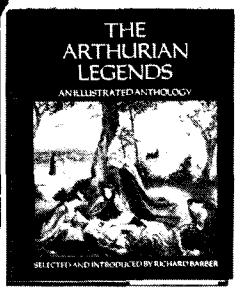

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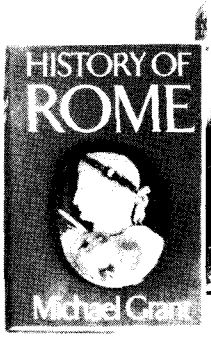

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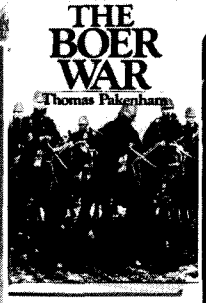

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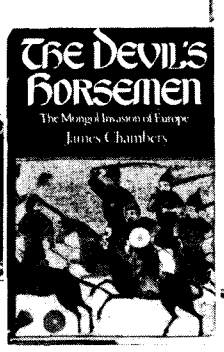

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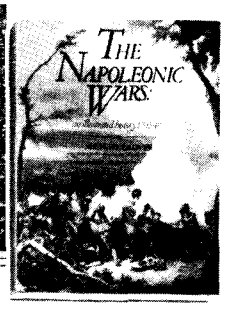

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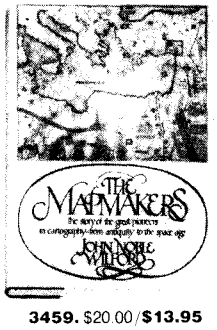

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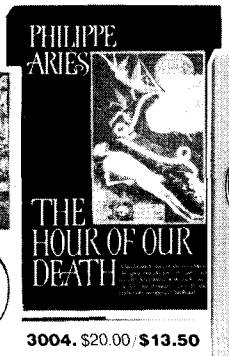

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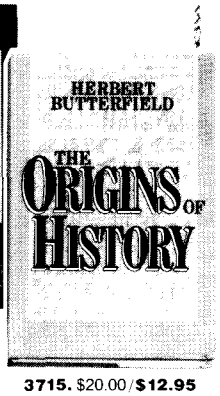

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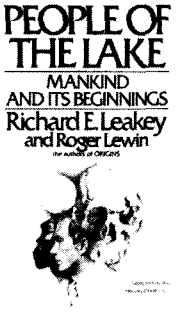

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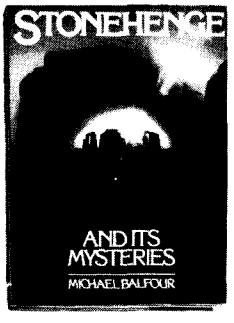

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First). Oakes, a Yale golden-boy turned CIA spy, acknowledges only two desires: to fornicate liberally and to embarrass Khrushchev. But the fun in *Marco Polo* lies less in watching Oakes as a fledgling James Bond than in watching Buckley bring such historical figures as Dwight Eisenhower, Allen Dulles, J. Edgar Hoover, and Nikita Khrushchev to fictional life in one delicious, it-could-have-been scene after another.

Buckley trips over occasional anachronisms (the term *mole* was coined in 1975 by John le Carré, and Eisenhower wouldn't have used it in 1959; also, suspected felons weren't commonly told of their rights by arresting officers until after the Miranda decision in 1966). But as a spy-novelist, Buckley has gained a fine sense of balance since he wrote *Saving the Queen*. *Marco Polo, If You Can* is an entertaining revisionist romp.

—HENRY WEIL

A Mother and Two Daughters
by Gail Godwin
The Viking Press, 525 pp., $15.95

LIKE ITS TITLE, this novel is straightforward but just a little dull. The characters are likable enough, and their lives touch most of the usual watershed events we have come to anticipate from a modern novel about modern women: an abortion, a divorce, an attempted teenage suicide, a birth out of wedlock, a fatal bout with cancer, getting fired, and turning 40. Gail Godwin earnestly sticks by her characters through these crises. The only trouble is, like the people next door, they're nice but not very interesting.

Cate is an aging adventuress. Her conservative, compulsively organized sister, Lydia, is a graduate of gourmet school and of a somnolent marriage. We follow their unparallel progress through several love affairs. The plot demands that Cate be unpredictable. But her major claim to notoriety seems to be that she once bit a policeman while leading some prep-school girls in a protest against the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. We are meant to admire Cate's freewheeling spirit when she rejects a rich man she genuinely cares about because "it would have been very easy just to lie back... and let him say 'I'll take care of everything.'" Simplistic? Yes, and predictable, and not what readers have come to expect from the creator of *Violet Clay* and *The Odd Woman*.

—LAURA GERINGER

Pictor's Metamorphoses and Other Fantasies
by Hermann Hesse
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
213 pp., $15.95

IN "LULU," the longest story in this collection of Hermann Hesse's fantasies and whimsical musings, a character says, "A poet has to return to the wellsprings of the unconscious, knowledge and learning being of little use to him."

Hesse was constantly fighting off the intellect. His characters' quests were essentially for knowledge of the heart—knowledge that, in "civilized" man, was often banished to the unconscious, from which it had to be recovered. These stories—written from 1900 to 1951 (with the exception of one piece, written when Hesse was 10)—all express that search for recovery either explicitly through plot, or subtly through structure.

A few of the stories have an inventive charm: the tale of a town simpleton who becomes, in turn, an object of ridicule, a wise man, and a scapegoat; a first-person, anthropomorphic reminiscence of the author's "friendship" with a jackdaw; and the title work, a tale of the enduring universality of love. But even the best of these stories do not resonate the way fables should; they do not excite those unconscious realms to which they should be speaking directly. There is no wonder, no mystery, no terror here—only the rather self-conscious constructs of a writer who spent his life trying, and mostly failing, to find his true voice.

—CAREY HORWITZ

Ballads, Blues and Swan Songs
by William Wiser
Atheneum, 192 pp., $10.95

THOSE IN SEARCH of lyricism in any of the tales in *Ballads, Blues and Swan Songs* will soon discover the title to be a feeble irony. William Wiser, author of last year's acclaimed novel *Disappearances*, has crafted a series of smooth, but descriptively poor compositions that seem less like stories than abstract sketches of rootless people in search of their souls.

Though the locale may shift from the American South to France, and though the characters may be white tourists or black drifters, neither figure nor landscape is fleshed out. Only in their occasional grotesqueness do these stories shake off their torpor and come to life. In "Story Hour," a bigoted schoolmarm caps off a reading of Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" by having one of her charges wall up a small black girl in a county courthouse.

Such touches are rare and unsatisfying. Wiser's prose, while lean and fluid, is constrained by its own economy. The reader knows and cares too little about his characters to experience either surprise or recognition. —DAVID BELL

Nonfiction Briefs

FDR, 1882-1945: A Centenary Remembrance
by Joseph Alsop
The Viking Press, 256 pp., $25

DR. NEW DEAL and Dr. Win the War, otherwise known as Franklin D. Roosevelt, was born 100 years ago and was first elected president 50 years ago, so be

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prepared—1982 will reverberate with remembrances, appraisals, and salutes. Few should be more satisfying than the present volume, which combines 230 photographs (many of them from the Hyde Park archives and hitherto unpublished) with a superb extended essay by the political commentator and Roosevelt cousin, Joseph Alsop. The essay is at once a personal memoir and an accounting. It is deeply affectionate without being sentimental, and admiring without being dumb.

There are revealing anecdotes (some of them new!), and Alsop isn't shy with FDR's mistakes and defects—not least his debonair and sometimes cruel manipulation of people, especially his wife. But it's the strengths that tell: his boldness and craft, his appreciation of "the unobserved gain," his sense of timing, his moral vision. What was revolutionary about the New Deal, Alsop says, is that FDR "included the excluded." He also conveyed "absolute confidence" that *together* the nation would triumph over any adversary. This book is an anatomy of that confidence, and a reminder of how lucky we were.

—ELIOT FREMONT-SMITH

Scenes of Childhood
by Sylvia Townsend Warner
The Viking Press, 177 pp., $10.95

BY THE TIME English author Sylvia Townsend Warner died in 1978 at the age of 85, she had written seven novels, eight collections of short stories, six volumes of verse, and a biography of English novelist T.H. White. Also, beginning in the 1930s, she contributed a series of brief reminiscences to the *New Yorker*, from which most of this brilliant collection has been culled.

Scenes of Childhood presents 28 crystalline glimpses into the world of Warner's youth—parents, butlers, nannies, the psychic family poodle—a world of English eccentricity masquerading as ordinary. Deftly, Warner captures a child's peculiar juxtaposition of subjectiveness and fact that makes the reader see the world afresh. In "The Gorgeous West" she describes a first encounter: "My mother was not a woman to blanch at novelties. I do not claim that she embodied a spirit of dauntless research into the unknown, but if she heard or read of anything new she didn't want to be behindhand in getting hold of it. Accordingly, one morning in the first decade of this century our breakfast table displayed a bowl of yellow fruit—globular, like

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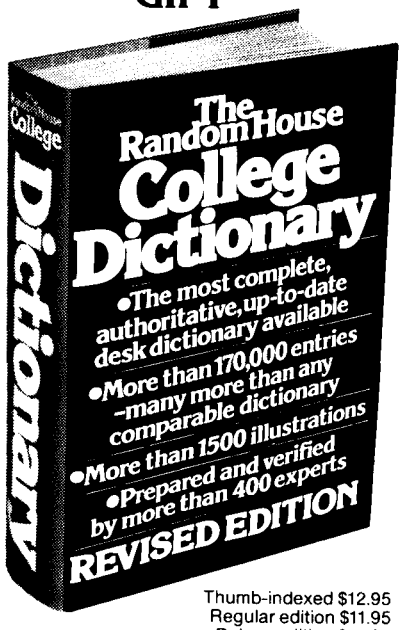
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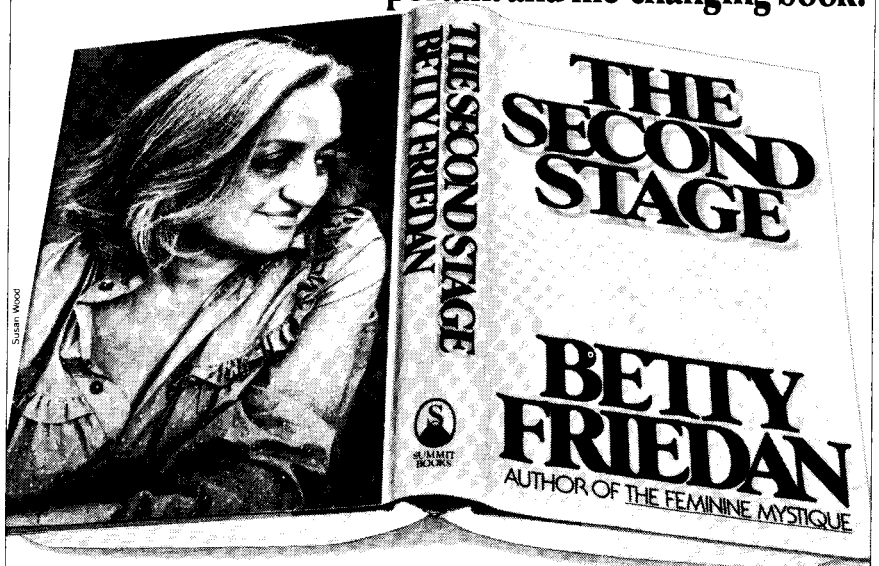

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—Erica Jong, *Saturday Review*

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oranges, but larger and sleeker. 'Grapefruit,' she said, in the casual manner she reserved for such introductions. 'Americans eat them. At breakfast.'"

These dry, perceptive, and charming impressions of childhood are to be savored. —SUSAN K. REED

The Hollywood Writers' War
by Nancy Lynn Schwartz, completed by Sheila Schwartz
Alfred A. Knopf, 352 pp., $17.95

THIS SAD, fascinating book, which begins with the "delirious frenzy" of the progressive 1930s and ends with the bleak paranoia of the Red-baiting 1950s, is a history of Hollywood writers and their 15-year struggle to organize. With characters like Humphrey Bogart, Dorothy Parker, Ronald Reagan, Dashiell Hammett, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Katharine Hepburn, and William Randolph Hearst, the story of the Screenwriters' Guild is so intrinsically and irresistibly dramatic that it is surprising no one has written it in detail before. Now it is *almost* written: Nancy Lynn Schwartz died suddenly before completing the manuscript and her mother, novelist Sheila Schwartz, had to add the final touches. The book does lurch to a rather abrupt, overgeneralized conclusion, but its meticulous research and punchy style make it a valuable and colorful document.

The most riveting and disturbing portion of the book traces the sorry history of the blacklists. Most of the writers, actors, and producers interviewed here speak regretfully of the blacklist, which ruined hundreds of writers and reputedly drove some to suicide. On the other hand, Ronald Reagan has been quoted as saying, "There was no blacklist of [sic] Hollywood." Written three years ago, this book is more timely than its late author could have realized. —JACK SULLIVAN

Life After Marriage: Love in an Age of Divorce
by A. Alvarez
Simon & Schuster, 288 pp., $13.95

IN *THE SAVAGE GOD,* A. Alvarez discussed suicide from a literary and personal point of view. In this new book, he attempts to treat divorce similarly, stating clearly that his concern is with people rather than with theories and statistics. He claims that he isn't trying to prove a point, but intends only to present the experiences of individuals whose lives have been transformed by divorce. It soon becomes obvious, however, that his openly unmethodical approach is simply an excuse for the book's almost complete lack of focus and organization.

Contrary to Alvarez's early statements, the first half of *Life After Marriage* contains almost nothing about real people in recognizable situations. It jumps from a description of the author's own, exceptionally naive, first marriage in the 1950s, to a rambling discussion of D.H. Lawrence and Frieda, to an especially misplaced consideration of sex in turn-of-the-century Boston, and then on to an eclectic history of divorce. When Alvarez finally addresses divorce in the last two decades, the people whose experiences he uses to elucidate divorce's devastating effects are too transparent to be credible.

Perhaps Alvarez feels that an abundance of adjectives, literary allusions, and metaphors is an adequate substitute for precise reporting and clarity. Had he avoided these distracting embellishments and plotted his story more carefully, he might have written a fresh and convincing essay instead of this meandering, disappointing book. —CAROL VERDERESE

Mars
by Fritz Zorn
Alfred A. Knopf, 228 pp., $12.95

AS THE JOURNAL of a cancer patient who eventually succumbed to the disease, *Mars* could easily have been a sweetly philosophical bit of pap. It is not. Instead, it is both bitter and unsettling. Zorn is angry not because his body is riddled with tumors but because he has been raised to be a joyless wraith.

Young, rich, educated, and desperately neurotic, Zorn lived a life that was far more tragic than his death. He was taught to have no opinions or feelings of his own, to circumvent thorny issues. An emotionally blunted conformist, he died, at age 32, without having made love to a woman. Ironically, catastrophic illness—which, to Zorn's mind, was psychosomatic—provides the necessary catharsis. When the floodgates open, he is consumed by welcome anger. Rage, he finds, is preferable to numbness.

Although well received in Europe, the book is marred by the same lack of imagination that marked its author's life. Zorn's reflections are bereft of enlivening detail; one longs for anecdotes, for dialogue. And his voice is curiously pallid. One is tempted to forgive him, however, for he reminds us that he is only one among many who have died without learning to live. —MICHELLE GREEN

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SR Competition No. 28

There is a soup mix called "Hearty Chicken." We cannot eat it. Our appetite refuses to coexist with the notion that it was made from some amiable old bird with an infectious laugh, a robust smile, and a jovial twinkle in his eye. What is wrong with food manufacturers, menu writers, and the like? Don't they realize that we sensitive souls pay attention to words? Send us some menus, recipes, ingredient labels, product names, and so on—anything having to do with the collision between what we eat and what we *call* what we eat. Twenty-five dollars and a nice plate of *Ochsenaugen*—or "ox eyes," as the fastidious Germans call fried eggs—to our three winners.

Entries for Competition No. 28 must be received by January 29 and the winners will be announced in the April issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 28, *Saturday Review*, 150 East 58 Street, New York, New York 10155. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 25

Never again, friends. Never again will we dangle before the readers of *Saturday Review* the awful temptation of the limerick! Not since the double-dactyl contest last spring has our postman groaned under a heavier burden, though it was not heavier than our conscience as we read tear-stained letters from addicts who had been off the limerick for years only to be seduced again by our thoughtless challenge. Well, we have at least the satisfaction of announcing that the *Senegaliad* (with every stanza beginning "There was once an old Senegalese") is now finished. The agent who will negotiate its publication objected at first to its being half again as long as Proust's novel, but she had no answer to our prompt rejoinder that it was *much* more interesting.

We are always gladdened by the incidental intelligence that these entries bring in. Did you know, for instance, that an extraordinary number of people pronounce *police* "puh-leez" (as in "Will you police shut up")? Nor do they make the least distinction between *cease* and *seas*, or between *niece* and *knees*. Down on your niece, sinner! And surely many hundreds of readers feel improved by knowing what they hardly suspected before, that the capital of the Republic of Senegal is Dakar. We regret to report, however, that a lady in North Dakota thinks there is a cocktail made with rum and lime juice called a Dakary.

At any rate, we can now give you a succinct profile of our hero. His favorite authors are Gay Talese and Peter De Vries. His favorite foods are cheese, peas, and afternoon teas. Favorite resort: Belize. Garment: BVDs. Joints: knees. Respiration: wheeze. And his favorite stratagem in foreplay, to which he devotes much of his waking life: pleas. Or *Please*! (or police?)

Georgette Protan and David Yetter, of Philadelphia, share the first prize for the following ingenious lines:

There was once an old Senegalese,
Who, touring some Indian tepees,
  Encountered a hag
  With a Confederate flag:
She was one of the Seneca Lees.

And, though we dread the charge of regional chauvinism, the second prize winner, Carole Lyons of Arlington, Virginia (where else?), continues the Lee theme:

There was once an old Senegalese,
Acclaimed for dessert recipes,
  Whose son mass produces
  Eclairs, tortes, and mousses,
And labels them Sahara Lee's.

Finally, third prize goes to Kathleen Schenley of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, mostly because we like it, but also as a tribute to the several hundred people who used the same rhymes:

There was once an old Senegalese,
Who burned with his hatred for cheese.
  His idea of fun
  Was to take up his gun
And spend the day shooting the Bries.

We hate to print honorable mentions, since everyone finds among them gems that ought to have finished in the money. Such is the life of a judge. Here goes.

There was once an old Senegalese,
Who, obsessed with nonsensical glees,
  Would gnaw on his knuckles
  To muffle his chuckles,
And produce a ventricular wheeze.
(Marlow Sholander)

There was once an old Senegalese,
Who loved to deflower young trees.
  His unnatural ways
  Brought an end to his days,
And he died of the Dutch Elm disease.
(William C. Morgan)

Puzzles

Literary Crypt No. 173

UXPERIMENT LARGO ARNYEAQ YEQYXM NYDA ENOXVZ, JSN NDVXAN EAONDANVT MXIRQ-AEKXO QXAESO.

IRADA PRTVX

Wit Twister No. 185

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of a word.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ than setbacks he's weathered before,

This sudden _ _ _ _ _ _ _ would have shut down his store,
Except that his spouse, who _ _ _ _ _ _ _ him, had sold

Her precious _ _ _ _ _ _ _ of old silver and gold.

Walter Hasenmueller
Prescott, Arizona

Answers next month

December Answers

Literary Crypt No. 172

The self-hatred that destroys is the waste of unfulfilled promise.

Moss Hart

Wit Twister No. 184

canter, Cretan, trance, nectar, recant

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 214

Lewis Thomas: (The) Medusa and the Snail

You'd think, to read about it, that we'd only just discovered selves. Having long suspected that there was *something alive* in there, running the place, separate from everything else, absolutely individual and independent, we've celebrated by giving it a real name. My self.

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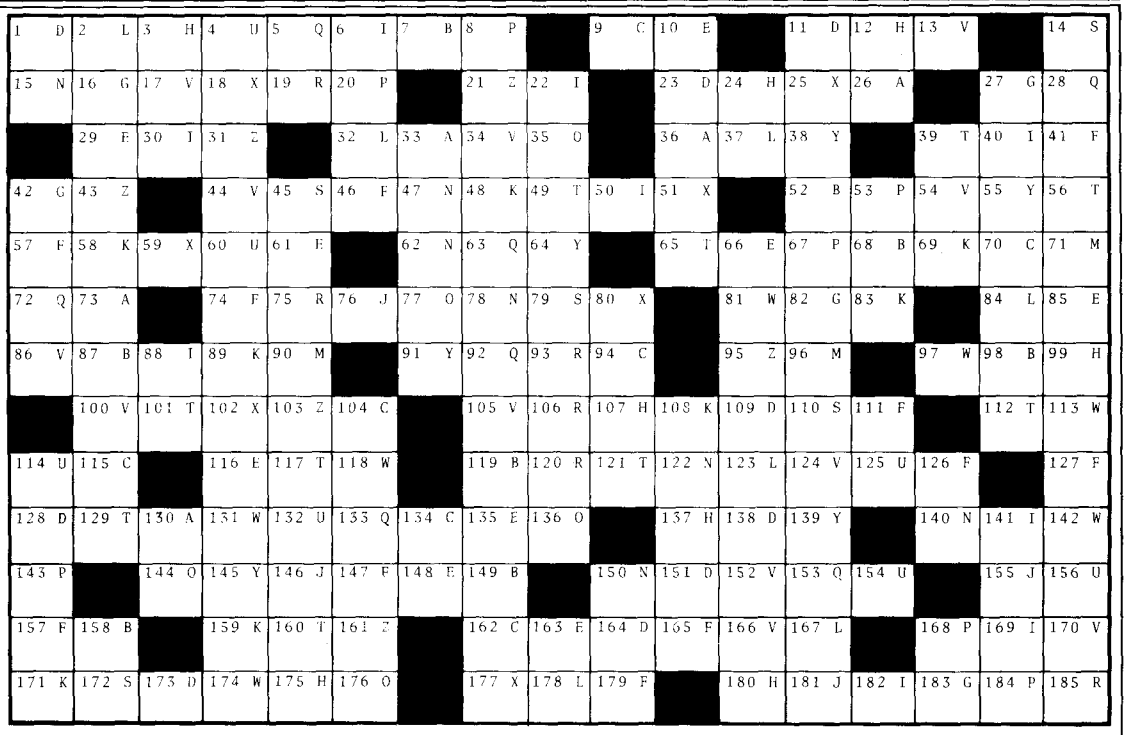
Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If thr is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.



Middleton Double-Crostic No.215

A. Screwy, loony — 26 33 36 130 73

B. Development — 87 119 149 158 7 52 68 98

C. Diversified with spots or blotches — 115 134 162 9 70 94 104

D. Malformation — 109 23 138 151 1 173 164 11 128

E. Like a bulldog's jaw; driven by water passing underneath — 135 148 61 66 85 116 163 10 29

F. Having correct opinions or principles (comp.) — 41 57 74 111 46 127 147 165 126 157 179

G. Kind of bull, tweed, potato, terrier, whiskey, daisy, stew — 183 16 27 42 82

H. Captivate, charm — 99 107 175 12 24 137 180 3

I. Enchanting — 50 141 182 6 22 30 40 169 88

J. Make ineffectual — 146 155 181 76

K. Point in a planet's orbit at which it is farthest from the sun — 159 58 89 108 48 69 83 171

L. Sap, mutt, schlepper — 178 2 32 84 123 167 37

M. Japanese statesman (1841-1909), leader in the modernization of Japan — 71 90 96

N. Blemished; saw — 122 150 15 47 62 78 140

O. Considers, marks — 144 176 35 77 136

P. Kind of term, affectedly learned, pedantic — 168 184 143 20 53 67 8

Q. "He'll even buy a ___ for a gal that he thinks is fun" (Berlin, "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun") — 28 92 5 63 72 133 153

R. Errand-runners in offices — 185 75 93 106 120 19

S. Italian composer (1623-1669); "Il Pomo d'Oro") — 14 45 79 110 172

T. "Much study is a weariness ___" (3 wds., Eccl. 12:12) — 101 39 112 56 121 65 160 49 129 117

U. Daydream — 132 60 156 114 154 4 125

V. "All with one consent praise ___" (comp. & wd., "Troilus and Cressida") — 34 13 100 105 86 54 17 166 170 152 124 44

W. Bear up under — 81 131 174 97 113 118 142

X. Longs, aims, or seeks ambitiously — 177 80 59 18 102 25 51

Y. Rented, chartered — 91 38 145 55 64 139

Z. Football coach at Columbia, 1930-56 — 103 21 43 95 161 31

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Books

Fiction

A Flag for Sunrise, by Robert Stone (Alfred A. Knopf, 439 pp., $13.95). Stone, author of *A Hall of Mirrors* and *Dog Soldiers*, combines action and philosophical rumination with a deftness matching Graham Greene's in this well-crafted, intricately plotted, and quickly paced thriller set in Latin America.

Rabbit Is Rich, by John Updike (Alfred A. Knopf, 467 pp., $13.95). John Updike has scored a hat trick with this sequel to *Rabbit Run* and *Rabbit Redux*. It is 1979, and Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom has reached a comfortable middle age, as Updike once again plumbs the dark underside of American domestic life. This trilogy chronicles the nation's evolution through three decades; it's something of a modern epic.

Sixty Stories, by Donald Barthelme (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 464 pp., $15.95). Philosophical excursions, blurred dialogues, cinematic descriptions, and nasty/chic relationships abound in these impressive stories written during the last 17 years.

The Country, by David Plante (Atheneum, 159 pp., $9.95). Plante continues the story—begun in *The Family*—of the Francoeurs, a French Canadian working-class family from Providence, Rhode Island. In muted tones, he touchingly reveals the pains and joys of family love.

Liars in Love, by Richard Yates (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 272 pp., $14.95). In his first story collection in almost 20 years, Yates, a writer who has yet to receive the recognition he deserves, presents seven lovely, long, realistic stories, at least two of which are gems.

Nonfiction

The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980, by Jonathan D. Spence (The Viking Press, 496 pp., $19.95). Historian Spence's enthralling narrative of 100 years of upheaval in China is first-rate intellectual history—adventurous in form, scrupulous in content, and passionate in its revelation of complex human drama.

The Mismeasure of Man, by Stephen Jay Gould (W.W. Norton, 384 pp., $14.95). The author of *Ever Since Darwin* and *The Panda's Thumb* has written an intriguing historical study of intelligence-testing and its inherent pitfalls. The book is a major addition to scientific literature.

The Skyscraper, by Paul Goldberger (Alfred A. Knopf, 224 pp., $25). The *New York Times* architecture critic and the author of *New York: The City Observed* tells the fascinating story of tall buildings from the Art Deco extravaganzas of the 1920s and 1930s to today's clinical glass boxes. Heavily illustrated.

Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist, 1875-1911, by Richard Winston (Alfred A. Knopf, 319 pp., $17.95). This wonderfully clear-headed book takes Mann up to 1911 and the inception of *Death in Venice*. Winston's death in 1980 prevented this valuable book from becoming the first full-length biography of Mann in English.

Who Killed Karen Silkwood?, by Howard Kohn (Summit Books, 462 pp., $14.95; paperback, $8.95). In 1974 Karen Silkwood was killed in a suspicious car accident on her way to deliver indicting evidence to the *New York Times* against her employer, Kerr-McGee, a leading manufacturer of plutonium for nuclear power plants. Six years of painstaking research by *Rolling Stone* reporter Kohn have made this the best piece of investigative journalism to date on the mysterious circumstances surrounding Silkwood's death.

Every Secret Thing: Patricia Campbell Hearst's Own Story, by Patricia Campbell Hearst with Alvin Moscow (Doubleday, 504 pp., $17.95). Patty Hearst's story is overly detailed, clichéd, and repetitive. It is, nevertheless, a harrowing tale that raises many questions and forces the reader to think about the times in which we live.

Life on Earth, by David Attenborough (Little, Brown, 319 pp., $22.50). Beautiful color photographs accompany this deft exploration of the history of evolution from the emergence of one-cell organisms to man. It is designed to accompany the author's TV series. Attenborough is a British zoologist and filmmaker.

SR's Phoenix Code

- Outstanding
- Excellent
- Good
- Notable

Film

On Golden Pond. Katharine Hepburn and Henry Fonda give us perhaps their most endearing as well as finest performances in Mark Rydell's beautiful screen version of Ernest Thompson's play about an elderly couple's coming to terms with life, death, and family.

Ragtime. Milos Forman's dazzling adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's 1975 best seller about pre-World War I America is a lush, lavish tragi-comedy, brimming with lovely performances—a syncopated tribute to a turbulent time when innocence was lost and the country was on the make.

Blood Wedding. Carlos Saura brings Lorca's classic work to the screen with breathtaking beauty and heart-stopping drama as a ballet choreographed by Antonio Gades and danced by him and his exquisite company of flamenco dancers. This is an extraordinary work, a standard-setting marriage of dance, drama, and film.

Whose Life Is It Anyway? Based on Brian Clark's stage success, this suspenseful drama about the individual's right to die boasts a stunning performance by Richard Dreyfuss. A dynamic film that gets to the heart of living.

Theater

Cloud 9 (Theatre de Lys, New York City). Act I of this British play lampoons Victorian sexual hypocrisy in vaudeville style. Act II, performed more realistically, shows how liberated our society has become—and what a vacuum this liberation has created. The off-Broad-

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way production is well acted, sensitively directed by Tommy Tune.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (Entermedia Theater, New York City). An exuberant and imaginative rock opera based on the biblical adventures of Joseph and his brothers. This 90-minute, off-Broadway production is colorful, and the performers are energetic. The show proves uniquely engaging to adults and children alike.

The Dresser (Brooks Atkinson Theater, New York City). An aging Shakespearean actor-manager on his last legs is helped through a performance of *King Lear* by the encouragement of his devoted valet-dresser. The script is mostly predictable, but Tom Courtenay as the effeminate dresser and Paul Rogers as the flamboyant star offer first-rate performances.

Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You (Playwrights Horizons, New York City). Christopher Durang's one-act play is an acidic, devilishly funny satire on the convoluted tenets of Catholicism, as articulated by an imperious nun who would rather shoot her students than see them sin.

Records

Bartók: Duos (Angel SZ-37540*, $9.98). No less a pair of fiddlers than Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman burn their way through 22 of Bartók's 44 folksy duos for two violins. Like Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the Duos were written as exercises but are fascinating works. Angel's recording is very good.

Mozart: Symphonies (3-L'Oiseau Lyre D16813*, $32.94). The fourth release in the Academy of Ancient Music's superb series of the complete Mozart symphonies is one of the best yet. The pieces on this record, written by Mozart between the ages of 10 and 16, are impressive and beautifully played.

Scarlatti: Sonatas (Vanguard VSD-71250, $8.98). Harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock's latest solo release of 13 of Scarlatti's emotional, knuckle-breaking sonatas is exhilarating and virtuosic.

Szymanowski: Symphonies (London digital LDR 71206*, $12.98). The much-underrated Polish composer Karol Szymanowski assimilated many musical influences in the course of his travels. His third symphony, informed by a North African sortie, is a sort of Sufi *Schéhérazade* for tenor, chorus, and orchestra—an enormous, rippling pool of neo-Islamic sonorities. His second is a more conventional Straussian affair. Both are lushly played and recorded. Antal Dorati leads the Detroit Symphony.

Mussorgsky: Orchestral and Choral Works (RCA ARL1-3988*, $9.98). Claudio Abbado leads the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus through an alternately rousing and soulful program of unexplored Mussorgsky, including the original version of *Night on Bald Mountain* and excerpts from works like *Joshua*, *Salammbô*, and *Oedipus in Athens*.

Sheppard: Mass and Responsory (Nonesuch H-71396*, $5.98). The choral music of John Sheppard, a 16th-century contemporary of Tallis and Taverner, has been brought to light by David Wulstan and the Clerkes of Oxenford, who perform the expressive "Cantate" Mass smoothly here. If these sounds appeal to you, Pro Cantione Antiqua has made a series of standard-setting recordings of 15th- and 16th-century sacred choral music for Archiv ($10.98 each)—Byrd, Desprez, Dufay, Dunstable, Palestrina, Tallis, and more.

*cassette available

Art

The Eighteenth-Century Woman (Metropolitan Museum, New York City). Including more than 100 ladies' costumes, accessories to match, and examples of the period's decorative arts, this exhibition gives an exhaustive image of the 18th-century woman of fashion. (Through September 15.)

Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist (Art Institute of Chicago). Two-hundred eighty-nine paintings, drawings, and watercolors by one of the leading figures of American realism. Hopper's familiar masterpieces are presented side-by-side with their preliminary drawings. (Through February 14.)

Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographer (Cleveland Museum of Art). One-hundred fifty-five photographs spanning the full range of Henri-Cartier Bresson's career suggest the scope of his interests. Images from 12 countries have been included. (Through January 24.)

Not Just for Laughs (New Museum, New York City). Work in all mediums by 20 artists, including Steve Gianakis, Robert Colescott, and Terry Allen. It's all funny (the range is from whimsical to hilarious), yet, as the exhibit's title suggests, underlying intentions are always serious. (Through January 21.)

Dance

San Francisco Ballet (War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco). George Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, Lew Christensen's *Vivaldi Concerto Grosso*, Sir Frederick Ashton's *Monotones I & II* (Satie), the world premiere of a new ballet to music of Stravinsky by Robert Gladstein, and Michael Smuin's full-length *Romeo and Juliet* to the Prokofiev score highlight the schedule. (January 16 through May 9.)

New York City Ballet (New York State Theater, New York City). The 33-year-old company, celebrating its 75th New York engagement, ends a month of performances of *The Nutcracker* January 3 and then returns to full repertory for the remainder of the season. (Through February 21.)

Bill Cratty and Company (Riverside Church, New York City). One of the principal dancers of the José Limón Dance Company appears for the first time in a complete program of his own choreography with an ensemble composed chiefly of Limón dancers. Program includes new work plus previously produced dances by this excellent dancer and highly gifted young choreographer. (January 15.)

Joffrey II Dancers and **The Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble** (Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York). Two important junior divisions of two major dance organizations. Many of the young artists, seen for the first time in these ensembles, move on to the big-time as members of the Joffrey Ballet or the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. (Joffrey, January 9 and 10; Ailey, January 30 and 31.)

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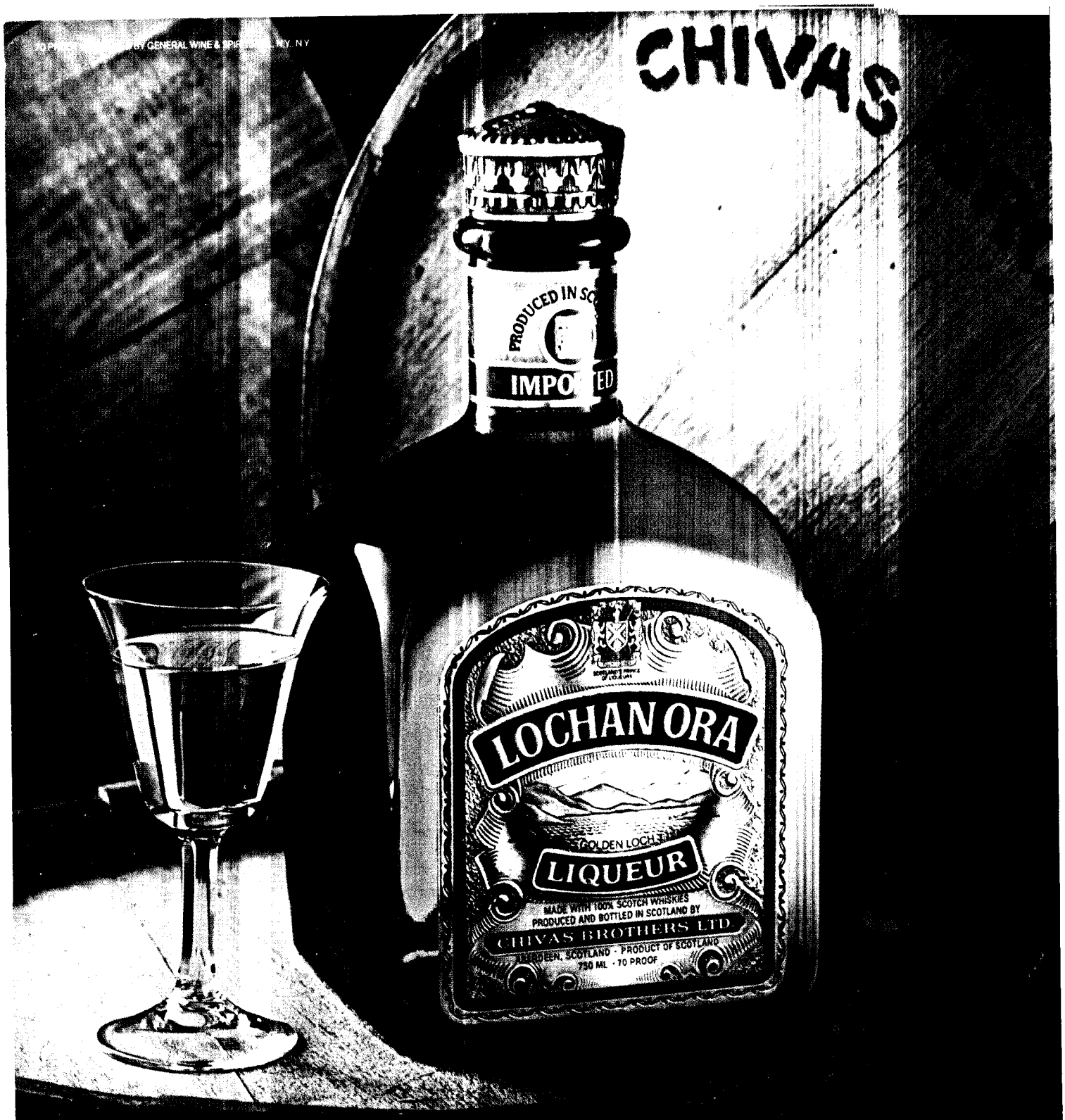

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